

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, May 8, 2000
Volume 36—Number 18
Pages 943–1020

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Editor's Note: The President was in Farmington, PA, on May 5, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under

regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for \$80.00 per year (\$137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for \$93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is \$3.00 (\$3.75 for foreign mailing).

There are no restrictions on the republication of material appearing in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*.

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Week Ending Friday, May 5, 2000

**Statement on the Legal Framework
Agreement for the Baku-Tbilisi-
Ceyhan Oil Pipeline**

April 28, 2000

I am very pleased that today delegations from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey reached agreement on the legal framework for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. Last November in Istanbul, I witnessed the signing of initial documents for this framework. Today's achievement completes this work and brings the pipeline project a critical step closer to fruition.

By this action, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey have shown once again their commitment to building regional cooperation, peaceful relations, and better lives for all their people. I congratulate Presidents Aliyev, Shevardnadze, and Demirel, along with all the negotiating teams, for their leadership in moving this project forward.

I look forward to the next phase of this effort, when companies from the United States, Western Europe, and Russia will work with those of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey to transform legal frameworks into commercial reality.

The United States is committed to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline as a key part of our overall approach to Caspian energy development. We want to ensure access to world markets for the countries of the region, while helping diversify sources of energy supply for consumers in the United States and around the globe.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan; President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia; and President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 7297—National
Charter Schools Week, 2000**

April 28, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Providing our children the high-quality education they need to succeed is one of the greatest challenges we face as a Nation, and helping communities establish public charter schools is one of the best ways we can meet that challenge.

Charter schools—public schools that are started by parents, educators, and communities working in partnership—are open to students of every background and ability. They also afford greater autonomy and flexibility in staffing decisions, curriculum design, and other areas than traditional public schools do. In return for this flexibility, charter schools must set and meet the highest standards, and they can remain open only as long as they do so.

These schools are helping us to meet many of our Nation's most important education goals. They are driving change in public schools across America by showing the benefits of greater parent participation, longer school years, higher academic standards, and character education. Charter schools offer reform, innovation, and increased choice in public education, and, by doing so, they spur improvement throughout our public school system.

I am proud that my Administration has taken a leadership role in promoting and funding public charter schools. When I took office almost 8 years ago, there was only one charter school in our Nation. By September of last year, that number had grown to more than 1,600 in 30 States and the District of Columbia, with more than 250,000 students enrolled and many more on waiting lists.

Since 1994, the Federal Government has invested almost \$400 million in public charter schools. Last August, I announced the release of almost \$100 million in Department of Education grants to develop, open, or expand charter schools across the country. And my proposed budget for fiscal year 2001 includes \$175 million for the Department of Education's Public Charter Schools Program. These grants and funds will help cover the costs of opening new schools and help existing charter schools hire more well-trained teachers, buy more books, computers, and educational software, and ensure that classrooms are safe and accessible for all students. Finally, these funds will aid charter schools as they develop accountability systems to measure whether they are meeting or exceeding State standards.

During National Charter Schools Week, I commend the many dedicated parents, educators, students, and other concerned citizens who, working together, have started charter schools in their communities to meet the growing demand for excellence, creativity, and choice in education. Because of their vision and leadership, charter schools across our Nation are helping to raise standards, expectations, and accountability in all of America's public schools. By investing in charter schools, we are investing in our Nation's future.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 1 through May 5, 2000, as National Charter Schools Week. I encourage the American people to mark this observance with appropriate programs and activities that raise awareness of the many contributions that public charter schools make to the education of our children and the success of our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 2, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 3. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7298—Law Day, U.S.A., 2000

April 28, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

The freedom of America's citizens is sustained by American law. In crafting the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, our Nation's founders wisely understood that liberty and law are equally important to ensuring human rights and preserving human dignity. Law without freedom becomes tyranny; freedom without law becomes chaos.

The theme of this year's Law Day observance, "Speak up for Democracy and Diversity," reminds us of the vital role that the law and America's legal community have played in protecting our freedoms and extending them to an ever-widening circle of Americans. Many signal victories for civil rights have been won in the courts by men and women of conscience whose commitment to the Constitution and the rule of law compelled them to speak out against bigotry and discrimination. Many Americans have found champions among the legal profession to defend their rights and to uphold our Nation's promise of equality and justice for all. From the War for Independence to the War Between the States, from emancipation in the 19th century to women's suffrage and the civil rights movement in the 20th century, courageous Americans have risen to the challenge of improving upon our laws and extending their protections to all of our citizens.

Today, thanks in large measure to the efforts of our Nation's legal community, people of all backgrounds, races, and religions are working, living, and learning side by side. The doors of opportunity are open wider than ever. But despite the advances we have made, we still see in our society stubborn

obstacles to true freedom and justice—obstacles such as poverty, unemployment, and lingering discrimination. That is why I have called America's legal community to action once again to lead the fight for equal justice under law. Whether promoting racial diversity in our judicial system and the legal profession, using their knowledge of the law to help underserved communities increase homeownership and entrepreneurship, or providing skilled representation to low-income Americans to ensure the protection of their rights, our Nation's lawyers can make important and lasting differences in preserving justice and promoting freedom and equality.

I encourage all Americans to observe Law Day by reflecting on the impact that our Nation's laws have had upon the quality of our lives and the strength of our democracy. From the promise of a more perfect union prescribed in the Preamble to the Constitution to the daily rulings of our modern-day justice system, our Nation's system of laws has made real our founders' vision and sustained their fundamental values. As we continue to work for a more just society for all, let us celebrate our legal heritage and reaffirm our reverence for the rule of law, which has safeguarded our liberty and preserved our democracy for more than 200 years.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87-20 of April 7, 1961, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2000, as Law Day, U.S.A. I urge the people of the United States to consider anew how our laws protect our freedoms and contribute to our national well-being. I call upon members of the legal profession, civic associations, educators, librarians, public officials, and the media to promote the observance of this day with appropriate programs and activities. I also call upon public officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings throughout the day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 2, 2000]

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Letter to Congressional Leaders on Imports of Crude Oil

April 28, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 232(c) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1862(c)), I am notifying you that I concur with the findings of the Secretary of Commerce in his report, "The Effect on the National Security of Imports of Crude Oil and Refined Petroleum Products," which determined that imports of crude oil threaten to impair the national security.

Further, I have accepted his recommendation that trade remedies not be imposed but that existing policies to enhance conservation and limit the dependence on foreign oil be continued. I am taking this action because we have already proposed additional tax credits to promote renewable and efficient sources of energy, new tax incentives to support the domestic petroleum industry, and further investments in energy-saving technologies and alternative energy sources, as the report suggested.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

April 29, 2000

Good morning. Next week, when the full Congress returns from Easter recess, they'll have less than 75 working days left to make this year a year of real progress for the American people. There is no more important critical piece of unfinished business than our

need to ensure that every American, young and old, has adequate, affordable health care.

Today I want to again urge the Congress to step up to this challenge by making the passage of a strong Patients' Bill of Rights and the provision of a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit top priorities when they return to Washington.

This critical legislation is long overdue. The more than 190 million Americans who use managed care or other insurance plans have waited too long for a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. They deserve the right to see a specialist, to emergency room care, wherever and whenever they need it, and the right to hold health care plans accountable for harmful decisions.

Last year, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, the House passed a strong Patients' Bill of Rights that provides the right protections all Americans need and deserve. It's a bill I would sign. But more than 6 months later the bill is still languishing in Congress. Despite their pledge to complete a real bill, the Republican majority has not only delayed action, it's actually considering legislation that would leave tens of millions of Americans without Federal protections.

A right that can't be enforced isn't a right at all, it's just a request. We need a strong bill that protects all Americans and all plans, not one that provides more cover for the special interests than real coverage for American patients.

Congress also has an obligation to strengthen Medicare and modernize it, with a voluntary, affordable prescription drug benefit. No one creating a Medicare program today would even think of excluding coverage for prescription drugs. Yet more than three in five older Americans still lack affordable and dependable prescription drug coverage.

Just this week we saw further evidence of the unacceptable burden the growing cost of prescription drugs places on senior Americans. According to a report by the nonprofit group, Families USA, the price of prescription drugs most often used by seniors has risen at double the rate of inflation for 6 years running, a burden that falls hardest on seniors who lack drug coverage because they simply don't receive the price discounts most insurers negotiate.

Seniors and people with disabilities living on fixed incomes simply cannot continue to cope with these kinds of price increases. That's why we must take action to help them, not next year or the year after that but this year. My budget includes a comprehensive plan to modernize Medicare and provide for a long overdue prescription drug benefit for all beneficiaries.

I'm pleased there's growing bipartisan support for tackling this challenge. Earlier this month Republican leaders in the House put forth an outline of a plan that offers as a stated goal access to affordable coverage for all older Americans. Unfortunately, their plan falls short of meeting the goal. It would do virtually nothing for seniors with modest middle class incomes between \$15,000 and \$50,000 a year. Nearly half of all Medicare beneficiaries who lack prescription drug coverage fall into that category.

It's not too late to give all our seniors real prescription drug coverage this year. We can work together on a plan that's affordable, dependable, and available to all older Americans.

So I say to Congress, when you come back to Washington next week, let's get back to work on a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights; let's get back to work on voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefits. The health care of Americans is too important to be sidetracked by partisan politics. The need is urgent, and the time to act is now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:58 p.m. on April 28 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner April 29, 2000

The President. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, President Page, President-elect Dillon, distinguished guests. I am really happy to be here. Happy to be reunited at long last with the White House Press Corps.

[*Laughter*] If I may, let me direct your attention to a photograph. [*Laughter*] Taken just moments ago, it proves beyond a doubt that I am indeed happy to be here. [*Laughter*]

Now wait a minute. It seems that my hair in that photo—[*laughter*—is a little longer than it is tonight. So maybe I am happy to be here, and maybe I'm not. Feel free to speculate. [*Laughter*] Admittedly, looks and photos can be deceiving. Now look at this photo. It's a recent one of the Vice President applauding one of my policy initiatives. [*Laughter*] But look a little closer. Those are not his real hands. [*Laughter*]

Now this photo. [*Laughter*] It made all the papers, but I have to tell you something. I am almost certain this is not the real Easter Bunny. [*Laughter*] The next one is my favorite. I really like it. Let's see the next photo. [*Laughter*] Isn't it grand? [*Laughter*] I thought it was too good to be true. But there is one thing beyond dispute tonight. This is really me. I am really here. And the record on that count is clear, in good days and bad, in times of great confidence or great controversy, I have actually shown up here for 8 straight years. Looking back, that was probably a mistake. [*Laughter*] In just 8 years, I've given you enough material for 20 years. [*Laughter*]

This is a special night for me for a lot of reasons. Jay Leno is here. Now, no matter how mean he is to me, I just love this guy—[*laughter*—because, together, together, we give hope to grey-haired, chunky baby boomers everywhere. [*Laughter*]

Tonight marks the end of an era—the after-dinner party hosted by Vanity Fair. [*Laughter*] As you may have heard, it's been canceled. Every year, for 8 years, the Vanity Fair party became more and more and more exclusive. So tonight, it has arrived at its inevitable conclusion: This year, no one made the guest list. [*Laughter*] Actually, I hear the Bloomberg party will be even harder to get into than the Vanity Fair party was. But I'm not worried, I'm going with Janet Reno. [*Laughter*]

Now, the Bloomberg party is also a cast party for the stars of "The West Wing," who are celebrating the end of their first season. You'll have to forgive me if I'm not as excited as everyone else is at the thought of a "West

Wing" finale party. But I've got to give them credit; their first season got a lot better ratings than mine did—[*laughter*—not to mention the reviews. The critics just hated my travel office episode—[*laughter*—and that David Gergen cameo fell completely flat. [*Laughter*]

Speaking of real-life drama, I'm so glad that Senator McCain is back tonight. I welcome him, especially. As you all know, he just made a difficult journey back to a place where he endured unspeakable abuse at the hands of his oppressors, the Senate Republican caucus. [*Laughter*]

I am glad to see that Senator McCain and Governor Bush are talking about healing their rift. Actually, they're thinking about, talking about healing their rift. And you know, I would really like to help them. I mean, I've got a lot of experience repairing the breach. I've worked with Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, I've worked with Israelis and Palestinians, with Joe Lockhart and David Westin. [*Laughter*] But the differences between Bush and McCain may be just too vast. I mean, McCain as Bush's running mate? Hasn't the man suffered enough? [*Laughter*]

George W. Bush has got a brand-spanking-new campaign strategy. He's moving toward the political center, distancing himself from his own party, stealing ideas from the other party. I'm so glad Dick Morris has finally found work again. [*Laughter*]

You know, the clock is running down on the Republicans in Congress, too. I feel for them. I do. They've only got 7 more months to investigate me. [*Laughter*] That's a lot of pressure. So little time, so many unanswered questions. [*Laughter*] For example, over the last few months I've lost 10 pounds. Where did they go? [*Laughter*] Why haven't I produced them to the Independent Counsel? How did some of them manage to wind up on Tim Russert? [*Laughter*]

Now, some of you might think I've been busy writing my memoirs. I'm not concerned about my memoirs, I'm concerned about my resume. Here's what I've got so far. Career objective: To stay President. [*Laughter*] But being realistic, I would consider an executive position with another country. [*Laughter*] Of course, I would prefer to stay within the G—

8. [Laughter] I'm working hard on this resume deal. I've been getting a lot of tips on how to write it, mostly from my staff. They really seem to be up on this stuff. [Laughter]

And they tell me I have to use the active voice with a the resume. You know, things like: "Commanded U.S. Armed Forces;" "ordered air strikes;" "served three terms as President"—everybody embellishes a little—[laughter]—"designed, built, and painted bridge to 21st Century;" "supervised Vice President's invention of the Internet;" "generated, attracted, heightened and maintained controversy." [Laughter]

Now, I know lately I haven't done a very good job at creating controversy, and I'm sorry for that. You all have so much less to report. I guess that's why you're covering and commenting on my mood, my quiet, contemplative moments, my feelings during these final months in office. [Laughter] In that case, you might be interested to know that a film crew has been following me around the White House, documenting my remaining time there.

This is a strange time in the life of any administration, but I think this short film will show that I have come to terms with it. Can we see the film?

[At this point, a video was shown.]

The President. You like me. You really like me. [Laughter] Now, you know, I may complain about coming here. But a year from now, I'll have to watch someone else give this speech. And I'll feel an onset of that rare affliction, unique to former Presidents: AGDD, Attention Getting Deficit Disorder—[laughter]—plus—which I'll really be burned up when Al Gore turns out to be funnier than me. [Laughter]

But let me say to all of you, I have loved these 8 years. You know, I read in the history books how other Presidents say the White House is like a penitentiary and every motive they have is suspect. Even George Washington complained he was treated like a common thief, and they all say they can't wait to get away. I don't know what the heck they're talking about. [Laughter] I've had a wonderful time. It's been an honor to serve and fun to laugh. I only wish that we'd even laughed more these last 8 years, because

power is not the most important thing in life, and it only counts for what you use it.

I thank you for what you do every day, thank you for all the fun times that Hillary and I have had. Keep at it. It's a great country. It deserves our best.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Susan Page, president, and Arlene Dillon, president-elect, White House Correspondents' Association; "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno; Senator John McCain; David Gergen, editor at large, U.S. News and Weekly Report; David Westin, president, ABC News; Dick Morris, political consultant; and Tim Russert, moderator, "Meet the Press."

Commencement Address at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan

April 30, 2000

Thank you very much. I must say I was very moved by Secretary Slater's remarks. But I realize he was lifted to new heights of eloquence by being back at his alma mater. And I also realize he was once again proving the adage of Clinton's third law of politics: Whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. [Laughter] They will praise you to the skies, true or false. [Laughter]

I must say, I was afraid, though, Rodney was about to commit—we have been friends for many years—I've never heard him say anything politically incorrect. I've never heard him utter a curse word. I've never heard him betray a character flaw. But I almost heard an ethnic slur today when he said he got me because I look like President Shelton. [Laughter] All gray-haired, middle-aged Scotch-Irish guys look alike, you know. [Laughter]

I'm very proud of Secretary Slater, and you should be, too. And I'm proud of General Coburn and his leadership in the Army, and Gene Conti, who is the Assistant Secretary for Policy at our Transportation Department with Secretary Slater. We have been richly blessed by this university. And President

Shelton, I am grateful for your years of service here and for our friendship in our early years in Arkansas, when we both had less gray hair and didn't look so much alike.

I thank Mayor Archer and former Governor and Ambassador Blanchard and Representative Kilpatrick and the other Michigan officials who are here with me today. I thank my longtime friend Jim Comer. I didn't know he was here at EMU this year until I saw him right before I came in. No American has proven so clearly as Professor Comer that all children can learn if given the right learning environment, and I am very grateful to him.

I thank all the distinguished board of regents and faculty and staff who are here. But most of all, I want to recognize the students and their parents of this, your first graduating class of the 21st century.

On the way in, Rodney was telling me that I would identify with a lot of you. A lot of you are first-generation college graduates. A lot of you had to work your way through school. A lot of you needed help in the form of loans and grants and work-study positions. And every one of you should be very proud of what you have achieved.

I also identify with your class because I may be the only President of the United States who ever studied here. I came here to prepare for my debates in 1992. And like you, I passed, and I thank you very much for the contribution you made to my education and to my years here.

You are graduating into a strong economy, the strongest in our Nation's history. You are also graduating into a time of immense possibility, here in Michigan and throughout the United States and, indeed, throughout the world.

One of my speechwriters wrote me a line that said, "Our economy is soaring higher than Swoop, the eagle." [Laughter] He said you would know what that means. All I know is that I am grateful for the chance that the Vice President and First Lady and our administration and I have had to work to create opportunity in America and to bring us closer together in one community.

I know that a great deal of this is because we are in the midst of a profound revolution, the most sweeping since the industrial revo-

lution a century ago. Information technology alone now gives us about a third of our growth, though only 8 percent of our work force is directly involved in it. It is bringing growth to every sector of our economy in a way we haven't seen since Henry Ford's first assembly line.

And I wanted to come here today to try to give you, this graduating class, some sense of the world into which you're going. You understand the opportunities, doubtless, better than I. I want you to understand the challenges, too. For economic opportunity is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end, to further liberty, to strengthen the bonds of community, to enable you to build families and have children and enrich your lives.

Before you lies a future of unparalleled possibility. But I want you to understand today that just as at the dawn of the industrial age 100 years ago, which was symbolized by Michigan, by Mr. Ford's assembly line, and the factories of Detroit, there are new challenges presented by this new era to our oldest values of freedom and opportunity and community.

Theodore Roosevelt came to this campus more than 100 years ago, at the beginning of the industrial era, when new rules were required to make sure that the industrial revolution worked for all our people. Without those rules, there would have been a terrible industrial divide between rich and poor, strong and weak. With those rules—with the wage and hour laws, the child labor laws, the antitrust laws, the Federal Reserve, and later the minimum wage, workman's compensation, unemployment insurance, Social Security—with those new rules, we built an opportunity society that produced the greatest middle class in human history, one that became even more successful and more inclusive throughout this last century with the progress of civil rights, women's rights, environmental and worker protection.

I want to say to you today that you are well-equipped for the possibilities of this new era, but we also need new rules for the information age to protect those old values, just as we did for the industrial age. For all the possibilities must be measured also against the challenges presented by this new era, challenges to our privacy as individuals, to

our pledge of equal opportunity for every member of our community, to our stewardship of the environment as citizens of the planet.

From our earliest days, part of what has made America unique has been our dedication to freedom and the clear understanding that real freedom requires a certain space of personal privacy.

Today, as information technology opens new worlds of possibilities, it also challenges privacy in ways we might never have imagined just a few years ago. For example, the same genetic code that offers hope for millions can also be used to deny health insurance. The same technology that links distant places can also be used to track our every move on-line.

In this information age, we can't let new opportunities erode old fundamental rights. We can't let breakthroughs in technology break down walls of privacy. Our response to this challenge will affect the lives of every single member of this graduating class and the lives of your children.

We are working with the Internet industry to raise privacy standards. In the last year alone, the share of commercial websites with privacy policies has risen a lot, and we will do more. But as my wife has said many times, some of these privacy issues presented by information technology are so sensitive they must have the protection of law.

We have taken steps to protect the privacy of children on-line, preventing websites from collecting information from children without a parent's permission. I proposed the first set of national standards to protect the privacy of on-line medical records, to ensure that your personal health information doesn't fall into the wrong hands. You shouldn't have to worry that your employer is looking at the medications you take or the ailments you have.

Today I'd like to ask you to think about the challenge to our financial privacy coming out of the information revolution. We are moving from cash to electronic transactions. A bank is no longer just a bank; it's often linked with an insurance firm, a broker, a travel agency. All this helps to give us added convenience, lower prices, and more choices. But it's also forcing us to redefine financial

privacy for the information age and to rewrite the rules that go with it.

There was a time when protecting your financial privacy meant safeguarding your passbook. Today, a financial record isn't just about what you're worth; it can paint a picture of who you are. Every time you write a check, use an ATM, make a purchase with a credit or debit card, there is a record, a record that technology can sort and track—what dish you ordered at a restaurant, what clothes you bought at the mall—that makes it easier for others to mine all of that information for their own profit.

We've taken some historic steps to stop information about your personal spending habits from being shared without your permission. But even today the law doesn't prevent firms within a financial conglomerate from sharing information with each other. In other words, the life insurance company could share information about your medical history with the bank without giving you any choice in the matter. The bank could share information from your student loans and your credit cards with its telemarketer or its broker, again without giving you any choice. I believe that is wrong.

Today I present a plan to protect the privacy of Americans' financial records. I challenge Congress to act on it this year. Because your information doesn't belong to just anyone; every consumer and every family deserves choices about how their personal information is shared.

First, before your financial information is shared between two affiliated companies, say, a credit card company and an insurance company, you would get notice, and you could say no.

Second, for the most sensitive type of information, I think there should be an extra level of protection. As more banks and insurance companies merge, lenders could gain access to private medical information and many insurance records. But no one should have to worry that the results of their latest physical exam will be used to deny them a home mortgage or a credit card. Under my plan, you'd get to say no.

Third, we would add that same safeguard to the information that makes up your personal spending identity, such as the list of

every purchase you've ever made by check or debt or credit card, everything you buy. Again, that information could be shared only if you say yes.

And finally, to make sure you have control over the comprehensive records that financial institutions may assemble about you, we'll make sure you have access to those records and the right to correct mistakes in them. We must be able to enjoy the benefits of technology without sacrificing our privacy, to maximize the promise of the information age and still protect our individual liberties.

Our national character also requires new rules for the information age that recognize opportunity for all, now means access to technology for all. Just as we closed the industrial divide in the 20th century, we must now close the digital divide in the 21st century.

You know, if you're educated for the information age, who you are and where you are don't matter as much anymore. I have seen that with people in the poorest villages of the world logging onto the Internet and getting an education, getting information once available only in textbooks, learning how to take care of their children, learning how to start new businesses. But if who and where you are don't matter so much, what you know and what you can do matter more than ever. That's why this degree and what you learned here is so important. That's why technology education is so important.

Technology in this new era will either erase lines that divide us or widen them. The Internet and computers make it possible for us to lift more people out of poverty faster than at any time in history, but it will not happen by accident. Many of you have learned this lesson in your own lives.

Todd Pasquale, of the college of arts and sciences, wasn't going to let anything stop him from earning his degree today, not even navigating his wheelchair through the Michigan snows. Thanks to EMU Online, he took his winter courses at home. Now, he plans to give back to the community by working as a counselor to people in prisons, because he could access technology. Let's give him a hand. [Applause]

Randy Short went back to school after her husband died, leaving her to raise three sons

alone. Today she earns a Masters degree with honors in website design. She hopes to start her own business, and she wants to help teach women to use computers. She has already given those women a lesson for all of us about the value of making sure technology education is accessible to every American. Give her a hand. [Applause]

Today I ask all of you to join me in reaching out to all the others across America who need these tools to build their future. When Vice President Gore and I started hooking up schools to the Internet, there were only about 16 percent of our schools who had a connection in 1994; today, 95 percent do. But I was on an Indian reservation in northern New Mexico the other day, introduced by a brilliant young girl of 13 who had just won a computer in a contest, who could not hook it up to the Internet because her home did not have a phone. Seventy percent of the homes on her Navajo reservation did not have a phone. We have to bring telephone service to everybody and then make the Internet as common as telephone usage is in every home, every business, and every school in the United States of America. We owe that to our future.

We must create incentives for American business to invest in people and places in danger of being left behind—left behind in their economies and their education of their children, in information infrastructure and special technologies for people with special needs. That's what our efforts to build bipartisan support for opening America's new markets and closing the digital divide are all about.

The third thing I want to mention is that the revolution in technology and communications means our lives are bound up more than ever with people far away from us with whom we now are in instant contact. Our community of values and interest spans the globe. Events half a world away can have an impact on us here, just as what we do has an impact on people who live thousands of miles from our borders, in ways large and small. I have a cousin in Arkansas who plays chess once a week on the Internet with a man in Australia. Doubtless, there are many stories like that in this room today.

We need a new level of international cooperation and new rules that deal with the most significant challenge of our common humanity, the environmental challenge posed by global warming. Scientists tell us the temperature is now rising 4 degrees a century. To anyone who has lived through a Michigan winter, that might not sound so bad. [Laughter] But the scientists also say that a significant degree of this climate change is due to human activity, specifically to putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from the burning of coal and oil. And if it goes unchecked, the consequences will be dramatic. Rising temperatures can melt polar icecaps, which lead to rising oceans that could swallow thousands of miles of our own coastlines and bury island nations. Changing weather would devastate our farmlands. We would have both more droughts and more violent storms and floods. Hotter weather could both cause more rapid evaporation of inland water systems and a drought which replenishes them less.

Think about the Great Lakes, where water levels are falling faster than ever recorded. They have fallen almost 3 feet in just 2 years. They may fall much more in the next 30. That would be a disaster for industry and for all living things dependent upon the lakes. And that is why I've asked Congress to fund our efforts to find out why the water is falling, to restore the Great Lakes waterways, to improve our stewardship of this vital resource.

Now, for most of the 20th century, economic growth did require burning more fossil fuels—more coal and more oil—which released the greenhouse gases, caused the pollution, and heated the atmosphere. Because of that, many people still believe that we must choose between two vital values, preserving our environment and making our economy grow. Thankfully, in the digital economy, that is simply not true anymore. It is now possible to grow an economy and improve the environment at the same time. New technologies make it possible to reduce harmful emissions as they make the economy more efficient and stronger.

Scientists right here at EMU are making environmentally friendly paints out of soybeans. Michigan, the home of the automobile, is now the home of cutting-edge re-

search into cars and trucks of the 21st century that will get much higher mileage. And soon, vehicles developed here, in partnership with the Federal Government, will use alternative and biofuels, which could get the equivalent of 100 miles or more to a gallon of gasoline.

These technologies are good for the planet and good for the bottom line, but we must embrace them. And I say this very seriously: It takes at least 50 years for greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere to dissipate. The class—this class, graduating today—it is your children and your grandchildren that will feel the harshest effects of our neglect in meeting this challenge. But if you don't do it, your children may not be able to do it for you because of the time delay. And it is no good saying that someone else should do it. We are the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases because we're the richest country, but soon China and India will surpass us. We must show them that they can grow even faster by following a different path, but first we must set a good example.

I have implored the Congress to adopt legislation to increase research and development in this area and to give significant tax incentives for people to produce products that emit less greenhouse gases and for people to buy them. It is a big challenge for you. You can have all the computers and all the money in the world, and if we squander God's environment, it won't be worth very much. I urge you to meet this challenge.

Let me say in closing, I am very optimistic about the new century. It will bring us more advances and answer more questions than any period in human history. We'll be able to store all the information in the Halle Library in a device the size of a sugar cube. We'll have microchips that stimulate the spine in such a way that people now paralyzed will be able to stand up and walk. I believe we will even learn what's in the black holes in the universe. But we must not be so dazzled by the bright promise of technology that we lose sight of the fundamental lesson. We must bring to bear our basic values on each new development in human history in order to assure that it works for the public good and maintains America's values

of liberty and community. That is the noble challenge that you face.

Henry Ford once defined obstacles as those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal. I hope your goal will be a 21st century American community that derives every benefit from technology while holding fast to our oldest values. I hope you will not take your eyes off of it. I hope you will embrace it and work for it. If you do, you will achieve it. And you will live in history's most exciting, prosperous, and humane era. That is what I wish for you.

Congratulations, good luck, and God-speed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to William E. Shelton, president, and James Comer, professor, Eastern Michigan University; Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI; former Gov. James J. Blanchard of Michigan; and Myra Jodie, student, Steamboat Navajo Nation. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at the NAACP Fight for Freedom Fund Dinner in Detroit, Michigan

April 30, 2000

Thank you. Well—I don't know what to say. *[Laughter]* I will tell you that this magnificent work of African art will be up in our residence at the White House before I go to bed tonight. I thank you for it.

Reverend Anthony, thank you for an introduction the likes I have never had and never will have again. *[Laughter]* Thank you for spreading the caring arms of this branch of the NAACP from East Grand Boulevard all the way to Africa. *[Laughter]* And thank you for being my true friend.

Thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, for honoring Secretary Cuomo. I am delighted that he and his wife, Kerry, are here with me, and he deserves the honor you gave him. You know, he and Secretary Slater make me look good every day. *[Laughter]* And too often I get the credit when they deserve more. I thank them for being here.

I thank Thurgood Marshall, Jr., for being here; Maria Echaveste, all the people from

the White House that prove the truth that we have given you an administration that looks like America. I thank all your elected Representatives who are here for their support and solidarity with the NAACP. Thank you, Governor Engler, Senator Levin, Senator Abraham, Congressman Dingell, Congresswoman Kilpatrick. Congresswoman Stabenow, thank you for running and proving that you believe in democracy. And thank you, thank you, thank you, my friend John Conyers, and thank you for giving him the award that he so richly deserves.

Thank you, Mayor Dennis Archer, and thank you, Trudy, for being Hillary's friend and my friend for so many years. Long before you were a mayor, back when you were a judge and above such things as petty politics, we were friends. *[Laughter]* I have enjoyed watching the success of Detroit and enjoyed helping on occasion you to contribute to it. I thank you all.

I bring you—I also want to offer my condolences to the family and many friends of Bill Beckham, who passed away last week, who devoted his life to improving the lives of others in this great city. And I bring you greetings from two people who are not here: the First Lady, Hillary, who said she wished she could be here, but she is otherwise occupied in New York tonight; and the Vice President, who is otherwise occupied somewhere in America tonight, who loved being here.

Now, I am told this is the largest sit-down dinner anywhere in the whole world. And I can honestly say, it's the only one I've ever attended that had four head tables—*[laughter]*—the only one I've ever attended when I didn't shake hands with everyone at the head tables—*[laughter]*—and I learned tonight that I was the first sitting President ever to attend this great banquet. I will say this: If this encounter gets anything like the press coverage it deserves, I am quite certain I will not be the last President to be at this banquet tonight.

More than anything else, I came tonight to say a simple thank you. Thank you for being my friends; thank you for being there for me in good times and bad; thank you for being there in our journey to help America go forward together.

For more than 90 years now, the NAACP has been America's friend, the conscience of a nation struggling and too often failing to live up to its ideals, challenging always all of us to look into the mirror, to face our faults and right our wrongs. I have proceeded these last 7 years and 3 months with a simple philosophy that I believe is your philosophy: I believe everybody counts, everybody should have a chance, everybody has a role to play, and we all do better when we help each other.

Dr. King once said our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. The NAACP has never been silent about the things that matter, and the life of this organization is just beginning. For all the progress we have made together, there is still much to do.

I am grateful for your support and the role you and your work have played in the progress we have made together for America. I am grateful that we have the lowest unemployment and welfare rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment in 40 years, the highest homeownership in history, and the longest economic expansion in history. I am grateful for that.

I am grateful that under the Vice President's leadership, we've created empowerment zones in Detroit and many other cities and set up community financial institutions to loan money to people that couldn't get loans otherwise, and done so many other things. I am grateful for that. I am grateful that we have a healing social fabric, that the homicide rate is the lowest in 30 years and gun crime's down 35 percent, and adoptions are up 30 percent. I am grateful for all of that. I am grateful that 21 million Americans have taken family and medical leave and that 5 million families have benefited from our HOPE scholarship to help pay for college.

I am grateful that 150,000 young Americans, including at least one I saw here tonight, have served our country in AmeriCorps in their communities. I am grateful that over 90 percent of our children are immunized for the first time from serious childhood diseases, and 95 percent of our schools are hooked up to the Internet, as

compared with 16 percent when the Vice President and I set out to hook them all up 6 years ago. I'm grateful for all that.

I'm grateful that, as Wendell said so much more eloquently than I could, we have appointed more minorities and women to more positions in the Government and on the bench than any administration in history by a good long ways. I'm grateful for that.

I am profoundly touched by your prayers, your friendship, and your support. I reminded Secretary Slater when Reverend Anthony was up here preaching—[laughter]—that I went home with him last week to a memorial service for Daisy Bates, the great Arkansas heroine of the civil rights movement who shepherded those nine children through Little Rock Central High School 43 years ago and who just died a few months ago. Daisy's minister, Reverend Rufus Young, who is a gentleman way up in his eighties, with a frail walk, with a strong voice, got up and looked up at me and he said, "Mr. President, the only reason you've survived is that so many of us black folks were praying for you so hard." [Laughter]

What I hope now is we will turn our prayers and energies toward tomorrow. For when people gather together, even though it's important to remember the past, in my wife's words, it's even more important to imagine the future. And I guess what I would like to ask you is, in this millennial election season, as a citizen—forget about party, forget about anything else—what do you as a human being believe that America should be doing?

I have waited a long time for my country to be in the position to create the future of our dreams for our children. I watched for a long time America just being paralyzed by these assumptions of what we could not do. When I got elected President, I think most people thought we could never get rid of the deficit, much less run a surplus, but we have. I think most people thought the crime rate would always go up and never go down. But it's gone down for 7 years in a row now. I think most people thought that people on welfare didn't really want to work. But that turned out to be wrong. Almost 7 million have moved out of welfare. They were wrong about that.

I think most people thought a lot of things couldn't get better. And now we don't have any excuses, because we know when we get together and work together, things can get better. And so what I want to ask you is, what do you propose to do about it?

A great country can make mistakes not only when times are tough but when times are good. I look out here in this sea of faces, and I wonder how many thousand stories there are here tonight—stories of triumph and heroism and struggle against the odds to overcome some racial or economic or other handicap—how many of you have lost a loved one to violence or other tragedies. And now, what I want to say to you is: We know things can be better; what do you propose to do about it?

We have choices to make. I believe that we should keep on going with this economic recovery until we have brought economic opportunity to all those neighborhoods, all those little rural towns, all those Indian reservations, all those people who have still been left behind and don't know there's been a recovery because they haven't felt it. And we can do it now in a way that we've never been able to do before.

I believe we should keep going until all of our children understand how to use computers and can make the most of it. I believe we should keep going until we find a way to guarantee health care rights to all Americans who are willing to work and do the right thing or who need help because they can't. I believe we should keep going until every American who wants to can go to college.

Let me tell you something else a lot of people don't know; even a lot of African-Americans don't know this. Last year, for the first time in history, the percentage of African-Americans graduating from high school equaled the percentage of the white majority children graduating from high school. Now, we ought to keep going until the percentage going on to college equals that and then the percentage graduating. But we have to open the doors of college to everyone.

We've made a lot of progress, but we've got more to do. And we've got more to do in so many other areas. I just want to mention two more before I leave. One is, in this whole business of sharing the bounty of America's

public service. You know, I never thought about this in the way—my appointment of people of color and lots of women to important positions—in the way most people think about it. I always figured we'd do a better job if our Government was more representative of the rest of the people in the country. I always thought we would make better decisions. I always thought empowering people and communities was a positive good. I never thought it was something I was doing for somebody else. I just thought I was trying to make democracy work.

And we made a lot of progress. But I want you to know, there's one real problem we've still got that directly affects Michigan. When it comes to appointing judges, the United States Senate is not doing what it ought to be doing, especially with regard to women and minority appointees.

Hey, I need your help on this. A blue ribbon study found that during the 105th Congress, women and minority judicial nominees took much longer to be considered than white males. It found that minority nominations failed at a much higher rate than the nominations of whites. Last year there was a disgraceful rejection of an African-American State supreme court judge from Missouri named Ronnie White, solely on the basis of party politics.

I have nominated two people from Michigan to the sixth circuit, and neither one of them have even gotten a hearing so far. Judge Helene White, a highly qualified Michigan appellate judge, has been waiting for a hearing from the Senate Judiciary Committee for 3 years, longer than any other pending nominee.

My other sixth circuit nominee, Kathleen McCree Lewis, the daughter of Wade McCree, is here tonight. She would become the first African-American woman ever to serve on the sixth circuit. I think the Senate ought to give Helene White and Kathleen McCree Lewis hearings. Vote them up or down. Tell the American people how you stand. Let us hear from you. Don't hide behind having no hearing.

I had to work and work and work to get a distinguished Hispanic judge and a female attorney appointed out in California. They made him wait 4 years. Now, why did they

do that? Because they didn't want to put him on the court. They just didn't want you to know they didn't want to put him on the court. [Laughter] So if you don't want to do something, but you don't want the people to know you don't want to do something, instead of saying no, you just never get around to it. [Laughter]

Now, we're going to have a new election in November. And we'll have a new President and a new Senate, and I hope a new House, with John as the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. But I want you to know this: I am proud of the fact that my party has never been guilty of delaying nominees to this extent and particularly putting the burden on women and people of color. And it's a shame, and we ought to do something about it. And I hope you'll help me do something about it.

Now, let me just mention one other thing, because we have lots of choices this year. You will have choices about whether to keep on changing in accord with this economic policy and bringing everybody into it while we keep paying down the debt, investing in education, give families tax cuts we can afford, or going back to the economic policy we had before I came in, with even bigger tax cuts that, once I get out of office, would benefit primarily people like me. [Laughter] But we won't have any money for education, and we'll start running deficits again.

We'll have choices about education policy, health policy, environmental policy, a lot of other things. But I want you to think about the things that we choose that really define us as a community. John Conyers talked about one. I'm proud that gun crime is down 35 percent. Anybody that thinks that America is safe enough is free to walk out on my speech right now. But we know we can make America safer, and we know the best way to do it is by preventing crime in the first place. That's why we want to close the gun show loophole and do other things to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. That's why we want more community police on the street. That's why we want more after-school and summer school programs for our kids, to give them something to say yes to.

But when three-quarters of the people in the penitentiary are people of color and they're more likely to be in the penitentiary than they are to go to college, there's something wrong still. I don't think we've done as much we can. I think we can make America safer and have more of our kids going to college at the same time. But we have a choice to make.

I think we ought to pass the hate crimes legislation. There are still people in this country who are shot, who are abused, who are killed because of their race, their religion, just because they're gay. We've seen it over and over again—tragically. We saw it just this week: Five people in a suburb of Pittsburgh shot and killed for no other reason, it appears, than the color of their skin or the way they worship God.

Now, you will hear all kinds of arguments about this hate crime business, but I have studied this. It is simply not true that we do not need national legislation making hate crimes against people, because of race or because of sexual orientation or because of disability or because of religion, a Federal crime. We do.

And I have looked into the eyes of the brother and the sister of that Filipino postal worker that was gunned down in California. I have seen one of those little Jewish children that was wounded, and his family, at that community center in Los Angeles. I have talked to the widow of the African-American former basketball coach at Northwestern who was shot walking in his neighborhood. I have put my arms around the parents of Matthew Shepard, who was stretched out on a rack in Wyoming because he was gay. And I have seen the brother and sister of James Byrd, who was dragged to death in Texas because he was black.

Now, if we want to be one America and we don't want any politics in it, the easiest way that we can do that is to join hands and unanimously say, "We can argue about a lot of things, but one thing we're never going to argue about again is our common humanity. Here is this hate crimes bill. It is who we are. It is what we stand for. It is what we believe."

You know, we do have a lot of bridges to cross. As long as there are people without

economic opportunity and we can give it to them, we ought to do it. As long as there are people who don't have access to world-class education and we can give it to them, we ought to do it. As long as there are working families who can't take care of their children, we ought to do it. As long as there—we ought to give them child care support and access to health care they can afford. We ought to do these things.

There are so many challenges out there, but the main thing I want to tell you is this: If the good Lord came to me tonight when I walked out of this room and said, "Mr. President, now I'm not going to let you serve the end of your term. I'm taking you home tonight, and I'm not genie. I'm not going to give you three wishes, but I will give you one. What do you want?" I would wish for our country to be truly one America.

I would wish for us to be able—you know, I have—you may have heard me tell this story on television, but I'm going to tell it one more time. I have got, on a table in the Oval Office—when you see me there with a world leader, and you see two chairs and two big couches and a table there—right on that table, you look next time—standing on that table in a vacuum-packed glass container is a rock that Neil Armstrong took off the Moon in 1969. That rock is 3.6 billion years old. And when people come in to see me, and they get all riled up, and they get all mad at each other, and they're thinking about little things, and they're all torn up and upset, ever since I've got that, I say, "Wait a minute, look at that rock. You see that rock? That is 3.6 billion years old. Now chill out. We're all just passing through here." [Laughter]

And I say that to remind you that, whether you're President of the United States or somebody serving us this dinner tonight, the most important things about us are not the differences between me and the people serving you dinner but the things we have in common.

And when life is all said and done, the stories we really will be thinking about in our last moments were who liked us and who loved us and what moved us and the springtimes we remember and the moments of personal drama and courage and meaning that came into our lives. The purpose of pub-

lic life, the purpose of citizenship, the purpose of the NAACP is to give people a sense of our common humanity and our common cause. You know, Wendell said that I learned that from my grandparents, and that's true. But I learn it every day, from all the stories of all the people I see.

You have given me a memory tonight I will never forget. Your support has meant more to me than I can ever say. The people of Detroit and the State of Michigan have been with me through thick and thin. But the only thing that really matters now is, what are you going to do tomorrow? What do you propose to do with this magic moment?

Let me tell you this: The last time we had an economy this good was in the 1960's. We broke the record of the 1960's for economic expansions. There are a lot of young children here who weren't alive back then, but I was. And I graduated from high school in 1964 in the middle of that great economic expansion, low unemployment, low inflation, high growth, everything booming. We thought the civil rights problems would be handled in Congress and the courts. We never dreamed we'd be caught up in Vietnam. We thought we would win the cold war, no sweat. We thought we were on automatic, marching into the future. And what happened? What happened?

Within 4 years, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after President Johnson, the great civil rights President, couldn't even run for reelection because the country was so divided over Vietnam. And within a few months, the longest economic expansion in history was itself history.

Life is fleeting. Things change. I have been waiting for 35 years, not as President, as an American citizen, for my country to be in the position you're in tonight, to build the future of our dreams for our children. That should be the mission of the NAACP in this millennial year.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. in the Cobo Convention Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Wendell Anthony, president, NAACP Detroit Branch; Gov. John Engler of

Michigan; and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI, and his wife, Trudy.

Proclamation 7299—Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, 2000

April 29, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Over the last two centuries, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have contributed immeasurably to the richness of our dynamic, multicultural society. Whether recent immigrants or descendants of families who have been here for generations, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders embody many of our Nation's core values, including devotion to family, commitment to hard work, and pride in their heritage.

The people of this diverse and rapidly growing community have contributed to every aspect of our national life—from engineering and computer science to government, the arts, and sports. For example, Vinod Dahm helped to revolutionize computer technology through the invention of the pentium chip. Governors Benjamin Cayetano of Hawaii and Gary Locke of Washington have devoted their lives to public service. The talents of novelist Amy Tan have delighted readers across our Nation, while architect and sculptor Maya Lin's stirring memorials to the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement have uplifted and inspired all who have experienced them. And diver Greg Louganis and football star Junior Seau have thrilled sports fans everywhere with their skill and athleticism.

While many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders today are thriving, others are still struggling to overcome obstacles. Because of oppression in their countries of origin, some new immigrants have arrived without having completed their education; once here, some have encountered language and cultural barriers and discrimination. Pacific Islanders, too, must overcome barriers to opportunity caused by their geographic isolation and the consequences of Western influences on their unique culture. For these and other reasons, too many Asian Americans and Pacific Is-

landers face low-paying jobs, inadequate health care, and lack of educational opportunity.

To assist this community in meeting these challenges, last June I signed an Executive order establishing the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The Initiative's goal is to improve the quality of life for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by increasing their participation in Federal programs—including health, human services, education, housing, labor, transportation, economic, and community development programs—which may not have served them in the past.

My Administration remains dedicated to building an America that celebrates and draws strength from its diversity. Let us use this month to reflect on the many gifts Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have brought to our nation and embrace the contributions that Americans of all backgrounds make to our increasingly multicultural society.

To honor the accomplishments of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and to recognize their many contributions to our Nation, the Congress, by Public Law 102-450, has designated the month of May as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 2000 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 2, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 1, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on May 3.

**Proclamation 7300—Loyalty Day,
2000**

April 29, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

In the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution, our Nation's founders first articulated the enduring ideals that have sustained our democracy—freedom, self-determination, justice, and equality. Each year we set aside this special day to reaffirm our allegiance to those ideals and to our beloved country.

The power and promise of our country's principles moved men and women throughout the American colonies to declare their allegiance to a new country and a new form of government that respected the rights of the individual. Throughout the decades, millions of immigrants drawn to America's freedom proved their loyalty to their adopted Nation in the words of the oath of citizenship and in their daily lives—working hard, striving to build a better future for their families and communities, serving in our Armed Forces, upholding our laws, and participating in our democracy.

Other Americans have showed their loyalty by courageously challenging our Nation to live up to its ideals. We owe a profound debt to the heroes and visionaries who opposed slavery, reformed labor practices, won the right to vote for women, marched for civil rights, and spoke out with conscience and conviction whenever we have failed to uphold the highest standards of freedom and justice.

We find perhaps the strongest and most moving evidence of loyalty to America in the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. From the War of Independence to today's peacekeeping missions around the world, generations of Americans have shown their allegiance by defending our Nation against tyrants and terrorists, protecting our national interests wherever they are threatened, and promoting our values across the globe.

On this first Loyalty Day of the 21st century, all Americans should give thanks that

we live in a Nation that inspires such fidelity. And we should remember with pride the loyal patriots who have gone before us, whose character and efforts built America, preserved it in times of peril, and gave life to our founders' dreams.

Recognizing the importance of loyalty to the continued strength of our country and success of our democracy, the Congress, by Public Law 85-529, has designated May 1 of each year as "Loyalty Day."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2000, as Loyalty Day. I urge all Americans to recall the valor and selflessness of all those who made this Nation worthy of our love and loyalty and to express our own loyalty through appropriate patriotic programs, ceremonies, and activities. I also call upon Government officials to display the flag of the United States in support of this national observance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 2, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 1, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on May 3.

**Statement on the Decision To Stop
Degrading Global Positioning
System Signals**

May 1, 2000

Today I am pleased to announce that the United States will stop the intentional degradation of the Global Positioning System (GPS) signals available to the public beginning at midnight tonight. We call this degradation feature Selective Availability (SA). This will mean that civilian users of GPS will be able to pinpoint locations up to 10 times more accurately than they do now. GPS is a dual-use, satellite-based system that provides accurate location and timing data to

users worldwide. My March 1996 Presidential Decision Directive included in the goals for GPS to: “encourage acceptance and integration of GPS into peaceful civil, commercial, and scientific applications worldwide; and to encourage private sector investment in and use of U.S. GPS technologies and services.” To meet these goals, I committed the U.S. to discontinuing the use of SA by 2006, with an annual assessment of its continued use beginning this year.

The decision to discontinue SA is the latest measure in an ongoing effort to make GPS more responsive to civil and commercial users worldwide. Last year Vice President Gore announced our plans to modernize GPS by adding two new civilian signals to enhance the civil and commercial service. This initiative is on track, and the budget further advances modernization by incorporating some of the new features on up to 18 additional satellites that are already awaiting launch or are in production. We will continue to provide all of these capabilities to worldwide users, free of charge.

My decision to discontinue SA was based upon a recommendation by the Secretary of Defense in coordination with the Departments of State, Transportation, Commerce, the Director of Central Intelligence, and other executive branch departments and agencies. They realized that worldwide transportation safety, scientific, and commercial interests could best be served by discontinuation of SA. Along with our commitment to enhance GPS for peaceful applications, my administration is committed to preserving fully the military utility of GPS. The decision to discontinue SA is coupled with our continuing efforts to upgrade the military utility of our systems that use GPS and is supported by threat assessments which conclude that setting SA to zero at this time would have minimal impact on national security. Additionally, we have demonstrated the capability to selectively deny GPS signals on a regional basis when our national security is threatened. This regional approach to denying navigation services is consistent with the 1996 plan to discontinue the degradation of civil and commercial GPS service globally through the SA technique.

Originally developed by the Department of Defense as a military system, GPS has become a global utility. It benefits users around the world in many different applications, including air, road, marine, and rail navigation, telecommunications, emergency response, oil exploration, mining, and many more. Civilian users will realize a dramatic improvement in GPS accuracy with the discontinuation of SA. For example, emergency teams responding to a cry for help can now determine what side of the highway they must respond to, thereby saving precious minutes. This increase in accuracy will allow new GPS applications to emerge and continue to enhance the lives of people around the world.

Statement on the United States Treasury “Debt Buybacks”

May 1, 2000

Today the Department of the Treasury is announcing that the United States will pay off \$216 billion of debt this year—the largest debt paydown in American history. This will be the third consecutive year of debt reduction, bringing the 3-year total to \$355 billion.

This important news offers yet more evidence that our strategy of fiscal discipline, investing in people, and opening markets abroad is working. The debt quadrupled in the 12 years before I came into office and was projected to rise still further. As a result of the 1993 and 1997 budgets, and tough choices in each and every year, the debt is now \$2.4 trillion lower than it was projected to be. As a result, interest rates are lower, leading to stronger investment and growth while saving money for American families.

We should not jeopardize the longest economic expansion in history with risky tax cuts that threaten our fiscal discipline. We should take advantage of this historic opportunity to use the benefits of debt reduction to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare and pay off the entire national debt by 2013 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President. Lifting the burden of debt from our children and grandchildren is one of the most important investments in the future we can make.

**Remarks to Independent Insurance
Agents of America's National
Legislative Conference**

May 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very, very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here. And I thank you, President Houston, and I thank your CEO, Paul Equale, whom I see all the time here in Washington pleading your cause. And I thank my old friend George Frazier. I heard that introduction. The truth is that only he and my mother thought I had a chance to be elected President when I ran. *[Laughter]* But it's nice to have someone like that in your corner.

I came here today, in part, on a sentimental journey. I couldn't hear everything George said, but the first speech I gave outside Arkansas as an elected official was in 1977, when I flew to California to speak for George when he was president of your organization. So, in a real sense, my political career began with George Frazier's presidency and ended with my own. And I am delighted to be here.

I also want to acknowledge and thank another member of this group from Arkansas, my friend Lib Carlisle, who agreed to become chairman of the Democratic Party when I was reelected Governor in 1982. I told him that it would just be about a half-a-day-a-week job. The truth was he had about a half a day a week left to devote to this job. And I'm surprised as a result of his public service that he could afford the airplane ticket up here. *[Laughter]* But I am delighted that he and all of you are here.

I also want to say I'm glad I got here for a few minutes of Senator Hatch's speech. Believe it or not, we're good friends. *[Laughter]* And it's nearly ruined him in the Republican caucus. *[Laughter]* And so he has to give me a little grief when he shows up. I would say in my own defense that it is true that tax receipts—I heard him talking about the tax burden—it is true that tax receipts as a percentage of national income are up. But the reason is, unemployment is low and incomes have grown so much. The actual percentage of income being paid by middle income fami-

lies is the lowest it's been in over 35 years. So I think that's worth pointing out.

I also would say, on the education issue—I heard what he said about burden of regulations—the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, who was Governor of South Carolina for many years, has cut two-thirds of the regulations and paperwork burdens on local school districts that existed when we became the new administration in 1993. And in fact, our administration, even though we've had to promulgate some new regulations over the whole Federal Government, has gotten rid of more regulations, some 16,000 pages of them, in every Federal agency than were eliminated in the previous 12 years. And we have the smallest Government since 1960. So I think the record will look pretty good on that score.

But I also want to say I appreciate the fact that Orrin Hatch has worked with me, particularly, to try to encourage the orderly confirmation of judges, when so many people would rather not deal with that issue. I've done my best to take that out of politics, and I think it's important.

I want to thank you for several things. If I could begin, I want to thank you for what you do every day when you're not being politically active. I want to thank you for what you do day-in and day-out to give personal insurance service to people across this country. I want to thank you for the work you're doing to modernize insurance, to build a presence on-line and in E-commerce. And I want to ask you to continue to help to preserve the privacy of your clients in the face of this new technology.

On Sunday I went to Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan, not too far from Detroit, to talk about the promise of the Internet age and the challenges to our privacy, including our financial privacy, that it presents. And I think it's very, very important that we maximize the possibilities of technology without giving up the American people's right to determine what basic information is or is not in the hands of people that they don't know and whom they have not approved to receive the information.

I also want to congratulate you for diversifying this organization, by reaching out to the

National African American Insurance Organization and by appointing the first woman to your board. The First Lady, particularly, thought that was a good idea. *[Laughter]*

And I want to thank you for the quality of representation you have here in Washington. We have not always agreed over the last 7 years, but I have always been impressed by the straight talk and the honest, open effort that I have seen from your organization to try to work out difficulties, work out genuine differences. And when we have worked together, we have done some very good things indeed.

We've worked together to get our economy moving again. When I became President, we had a \$295 billion deficit. It was scheduled to be nearly \$400 billion this year. The debt of the country had quadrupled over the previous 12 years, and I knew there was no easy way to get rid of it. So we passed an economic plan in 1993 that took us about 70 percent of the way there, and then we passed a bipartisan balanced budget in 1997 that had big majorities in both parties in both Houses supporting eliminating the deficit entirely.

We've now run the first back-to-back surpluses in over 40 years, and this year we'll make it three in a row. The United States this year is going to pay off \$216 billion of our national debt. That is the largest debt repayment in American history. This will bring the 3-year total to \$355 billion, and it's further evidence, I believe, that the country ought to have a bipartisan economic strategy of paying off the debt and investing in our people, in education, in science and technology, and in opening new markets at home and abroad.

Four years ago you put yourselves on the line for the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill. I want to thank you for that. Your support has made a difference all across this country, and I am very grateful. Again, we had not only the Democrats, Vice President Gore, and I but substantial Republican support. And we reached agreement, and it made a difference for ordinary Americans. And I'm very grateful.

It seems to me that this year the large question before the American people is, what are we going to do with these good times?

What will we make of them? You can probably recall some time in your own life or your own business when you've gotten into a little bit of trouble, not because things were so tough but because things seemed to be going well, and therefore, there were no consequences to breaking your concentration or taking a little time to stop thinking about tomorrow.

And I feel very strongly—and I think I can say this with some credibility since I'm not on the ballot, and most days I'm okay with it—*[laughter]*—but I think I can say, to me, the importance of this election is that America now knows that we can solve problems together. We know we can make real progress. When I became President, if I had said in my Inaugural Address in 1993, "You know, if you will just stick with me folks, in 7 years we'll have 3 years of surpluses, and we'll be in a position to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835," you would have said, "He seems like a nice young man, but we have a delusional person in the White House." *[Laughter]* If I had said, "The crime rate will come down 7 years in a row, and we'll cut the welfare rolls in half," you wouldn't have believed that. If I had said, "We'll find a way to work with the private sector to improve the quality of our air, water, and land and still have the longest economic expansion in history," you might not have believed that. So we know now, because of the success our country has had, that if we work together and we set common goals, we can achieve them. The level of skepticism or cynicism that was present in 1992, because of the difficulties that we've had for some years, is simply not there anymore. But the question now is, what are we going to do with a truly magic moment of prosperity?

And I won't repeat the whole State of the Union Address here, but I just want to mention two issues to you. First of all, we have to keep the economy going. It makes so much else possible. I did a police event the other day here in the District of Columbia, and I complimented them on having the lowest murder rate in over 30 years and the lowest crime rate in nearly 30 years, a big decline in gun violence, and all the things they've done. We've helped them put several hundred police on the street. And on the way

out, this police officer said, "Well, thanks for all the nice words, but the economy didn't hurt." It's very important that we do that.

We already have the longest economic expansion in history—by far, the longest without any kind of war involved, but including all the ones which mobilized the country for wartime. So how do we propose to keep this going?

I personally believe it's very important that we continue to pay down this debt. Why? Because Americans finance a lot of their purchases through personal debt. We finance a lot of new equipment and business expansion through business debt. The personal savings rate in America is too low, and I would like to see it go up, and I would support initiatives in the Congress to try to help it increase. But meanwhile, when we pay down the national debt, it increases the overall savings rate of America; it keeps interest rates down; it makes money more available—the Government is putting money back into the economy instead of taking money out—and it works as an effective tax cut when you pay the debt down.

The fact that we have gotten rid of the deficit and paid down the debt, according to the latest economic analysis I saw, saves the average homeowner about \$2,000 a year in lower mortgage payments and interest rates being lower than they otherwise would, and a couple hundred dollars a year on car payments and a couple hundred dollars a year on college loan payments. And of course, the availability of capital for business expansion is profoundly important. So I hope in the midst of all this debate this year, you will try to sort through whether, when it's all said and done, whether the commitments made by various people all add up and we can continue to do that.

Secondly, I think it's important, when we ask ourselves, how are we going to keep this economy going, that we continue to expand the base of America's customers. A nation in that sense is not much different than your enterprise. If you want to keep expanding, you've got to have somebody buying what you're selling. We have 4 percent of the world's population and 22 percent of the world's income. So it should be obvious. You don't have to be an Einstein to figure out

you've got to have more markets all the time in that sort of environment.

In that regard, there are two initiatives before the Congress today that have bipartisan support, and at least one—maybe both, but certainly one—that have bipartisan opposition. The first is the proposal to bring China into the World Trade Organization. That may not be something that you think is of immediate concern to insurance agents, but since you care so much about the economy, it's very important.

China's going to get into the World Trade Organization whether we vote to give them normal trading relations every year or not. And the deal we negotiated with them does not give them one bit of increased access to our markets but gives us huge increased access to their markets.

If you saw the deal, you would ask why they signed it. The reason they signed it is, you can't get into the World Trade Organization unless you're willing to trade. So they have a more closed economy; they sell a lot of stuff to us; our biggest trade deficit now usually is with them. And they have to open their markets. And we negotiated a very strong deal that will mean more jobs, more businesses, more investments for America. And from a national security point of view, it would, in my view, be a very, very unwise and precarious move to say that the United States doesn't care whether they're a part of the world community or not. You don't have to agree with another country on everything to say you prefer to trade with them than have an arms face-off with them and constant conflict with them.

So it's in our national security interests, but it's necessary to keep our economy going. There's 1.2 billion people over there, and increasingly, more and more of them will be able to buy what Americans can sell. And as people sell more over there, they'll have more to buy insurance with. It's very important. *[Laughter]*

The second thing that's important is that we should not forget that there are people and places in this country, many of them served by members of this organization, that have not fully participated in this economic recovery. And to some extent, there are local reasons for that that have to be dealt with

at the State and local level. But there are things we can do here nationally, and there is a substantial bipartisan effort to pass some version of what I have called for 2 years my new markets initiative, to basically go to places like the Mississippi Delta or Appalachia or inner cities or upstate New York or the Native American reservations—to go in there and say, first, we’re going to put in the infrastructure of growth.

I was in rural North Carolina the other day, and the Governor and I announced that his telephone companies were going to give broadband access to every rural community in North Carolina, which will enable a lot of businesses that are otherwise physically isolated to do Internet transactions that otherwise would not be available to them.

When I was on the Indian reservation, Shiprock, in northern New Mexico the other day, the Navajo reservation, I learned that 70 percent of the people there did not have telephones. I was introduced by a 13-year-old girl who had won, a brilliant young girl who had won a computer in a contest. And she couldn’t logon to the Internet because there wasn’t a phone line in her home.

We forget that a lot of our fellow citizens have not participated in this economy. And so we announced there that we were going to be able to provide basic phone service to those folks for a dollar a month, and we will be able to do a lot more—even though they are long way from most urban areas, we’ll be able to do a lot more business for them because of E-commerce once we get them all hooked up.

But the main thing that we have before the Congress is some way of giving tax incentives for people who have money to invest, to invest in these poor areas in America that are equal to the tax incentives we now give people to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Asia or Africa. I’m all for encouraging investment in developing countries overseas, but we ought to be giving the exact same dollar-impact investment incentives to invest in developing communities here in America. They’re the nearest markets we’ve got, and we ought to do it.

And let me say, finally, on the health care issue, I think it’s quite important that we continue our efforts to provide health insurance

and coverage and care to people who don’t have it. We still have over 40 million Americans without any health insurance. There are still too many children and too many working parents who don’t have any. And more and more older Americans and their families are overwhelmed by the costs of long-term care and overwhelmed by their medical costs, especially for prescription drugs.

So I hope this year that in this Congress we’ll find a way to extend coverage to more Americans. I hope we can do a better job to make sure that every child who is eligible for coverage receives it. Of the some 10 million children in America who do not have health insurance, public programs now in place—the Children’s Health Insurance Program that’s run by the State in all your States, and the Medicaid program, which is administered by them—would cover about half those kids today—today—with programs already in place. And it is very important that we continue to do a better job.

I also believe that we should pass the initiatives in Congress to provide a \$3,000 a year tax credit for long-term care. This is something that I think has broad bipartisan support. More and more families are having to deal with this as we live longer, and it really is a high-class problem in that sense. But it can be a very difficult and expensive one. And again, I think there’s bipartisan support for this. I hope it will pass, and I ask for your support.

And finally—I’m sure that Senator Hatch talked about this a little bit, because we’re having a dispute about what the best way to do it is—but I think it’s important that we add some prescription drug coverage to Medicare this year. And I feel very strongly that we ought to offer a completely voluntary program that’s available to any senior who needs it, with the most being done, obviously, for people with the least money. But we’re having an argument about exactly how to do it.

I think you ought to know the facts. More than 60 percent of the senior citizens in America today lack access to affordable prescription drugs. If there were no Medicare program and we were all starting again tomorrow, we would never design one today that didn’t have prescription drug coverage.

Thirty-five years ago, when Medicare was set up, it was for people who had acute problems. It was basically a doctor care, a hospital care program. Today, more and more seniors face chronic problems. Anybody that lives to 65 in this country today has a life expectancy of 82, 83 years. You know more about these tables than I do.

And believe me, if you just take the medical breakthroughs that I think are likely to occur in the next 5 years—sometime in the next few months we'll announce the sequencing of the human genome. We've already identified the defective genes that cause breast cancer, Parkinson's, may lead to Alzheimer's and other things. Before you know it, when young mothers come home with their babies from the hospital, they'll have a genetic map which will say your child has these potential problems and these potential strengths, and if you do the following 10 things, you will cut by 90 percent the chance that your child will get the following conditions. I mean, it's going to be a whole different world out there. And you may have life expectancy go up in the 21st century even more than it went up in the 20th century.

There have been a lot of studies to try to determine how long the human body would last if nothing bad ever happened. And the answer is, about 120 years. That is, if you factor out environmentally caused cancer, accidents, and crime leading to death, and we all had perfect nutrition and took good care of ourselves, our systems, most of us, would still stop functioning somewhere around 120 years. They've done a lot of tests with animals that show that no matter how well you take care of them, someday they just conk out. [Laughter] But that means that we've got quite a long way to go. I expect George Frazier to live about 120 years. [Laughter] But the rest of us are going to need a little help. [Laughter]

And so I think that will completely change the insurance business. You think about it. It will totally change health and life insurance if the average life expectancy goes up another 8 years. And it's why we also—I agree with one thing Orrin Hatch said—I hope we can avoid politicizing this whole Social Security debate. I think it ought to be discussed, and policy options ought to be taken care of.

One of the things that I've been trying to convince Congress to do is take the interest savings off the debt, since we're paying down the debt because not only—we've cut spending, but you're still paying more in Social Security taxes than we're paying out. So I think we ought to take that portion of debt reduction, so we don't have to pay interest on the debt anymore, that's due to Social Security taxes, and put it in the Trust Fund.

And then we could take the Social Security Trust Fund out to 2054, and then we could decide what else to do to try to increase the return, because when all the baby boomers retire, there will be two people working for only one person drawing Social Security. The ratio has normally been 3 or 4 to 1; it's going to go down to 2 to 1. So there are a lot of challenges there.

But the point I want to make is, this whole thing is going to change, and the emphasis, more and more and more, will be on keeping people well in the first place, letting them manage their own care, letting people stay at home, not overwhelming the hospital system and the medical care system. You would never, today, set up a Medicare program without prescription drug coverage.

So basically what we're having a debate about here is at what level to stop the coverage and how best to deliver it. And the only thing I'd like to say about the level, because I think that's very important, is that if you stop at 150 percent of the poverty line, it sounds reasonable, but that means that seniors over \$15,000 in income can't buy any medical coverage. Half of the people who don't have prescription drug coverage today are between the incomes of \$15,000 and \$50,000. And if you're on a fixed income of \$30,000, you may think you're sitting pretty if you're 75 years old. But if you get a \$2,000 a month medical bill because you've got a chronic problem, all of a sudden you don't have much money left. And I'm sure you all know this, so I hope we can find a way this year—I think there's a fair chance we can—to put this issue beyond partisan politics and also to get a program that works.

I also have to tell you that a lot of people in the insurance industry have been very forthright in saying that they think that our proposal is probably more workable. But the

reason that the prescription drug people don't like it—the pharmaceutical companies don't like it—is they think that it would cover so many people that we would have too much bargaining power, and we'd get the drugs too cheap. And if you listen to their argument, they think that that might mean that they wouldn't have enough profit margin to continue to develop new drugs. I don't want to paint them as the bad guys here; we're having a genuine argument.

But I think that if we are to design—if we design a program that doesn't work, then we wind up with the worst of both worlds. And the insurance industry could be left holding the bag if you're expected to offer policies that are not practical, that won't sell, and if they do sell, won't do what people want. That's why we've actually had quite a lot of really good dialog with people in the insurance industry about that, and I'm very grateful for it.

But I just want to say to you, this is a national problem that deserves a national solution. We should not have a program to cover senior citizens and disabled people's medical benefits that doesn't cover prescription drugs. We need to do this. This is a sort of measure of what we do with good times.

There are lots of issues I could mention, including the education of our children, the continued work to make America a safer country. I don't think we should stop on this crime deal until we have the safest big country in the world. We've still got a lot of work to do. And there are so many other challenges out there. But if we could just think about, here, keeping the economy going, extending its benefits to people in places left behind, and continue to make progress on health care—those are great goals worthy of a nation that is grateful for the success it has enjoyed.

And as I leave office, that's all I really want. I don't want to think that we squandered this enormous opportunity. For the last 7 years, Al Gore and I and all the people that have worked with us, we've tried so hard just to turn this country around and get it moving in the right direction. And now, as I leave at the end of the year, what I'm thinking of is how will we deal with the prosperity? It's a great measure of a great nation. And

I hope you'll do what you can to make sure we deal with it in an appropriate way.

Now, before I sit down, I want to ask your president to join me. Bill, come up here. We've got a little surprise for George Frazier. George is thinking about retiring after 46 years as an independent agent. I'm against that. I don't know, you know, you're not term-limited, why quit? [*Laughter*]

As you heard him say, I've known him all my life, since I was a little boy in Hope, Arkansas. And for all those years, I have known him as a person who always, always cared more about other people than himself and always gave more than he took, whether it was a Little League team that needed a sponsor or a hospital that needed a new wing or a young man starting out in public life who needed advice and friendship. He has been there for a lifetime.

I want to say that he and his wife, Effie, who are here today, are literally two of the finest people I have ever known in my life. And as I said, I had the honor of swearing him in 23 years ago as the president of your organization. And I think it's quite fitting that I started my career with his presidency and ended it with my own. I'm more surprised about mine than his. [*Laughter*] And I am very grateful to him for what he has been professionally and even more for what he has been as a citizen, as a human being.

So George, Hillary and I love you. And if you will come up here, I want to present to you a beautiful resolution that this organization is giving you for your years of dedication and service.

[*At this point, the President presented the resolution to Mr. Frazier.*]

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 a.m. in the Independence Ballroom at the Grand Hyatt. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Houston, president, Paul A. Equale, chief executive officer, and George Frazier, former president, Independent Insurance Agents of America; Lib Carlisle, former chair, Arkansas State Democratic Party; and Myra Jodie, student, Steamboat Navajo Nation.

**Remarks at the White House
Conference on Raising Teenagers
and Resourceful Youth**

May 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, and good morning. I want to join with Hillary in welcoming you to the White House and thanking all of you for coming. I thank the foundations that have helped us. And thank you, David Hamburg. I still remember when we worked on a report about the developmental needs of young adolescents back in the late eighties, in which we recommended, among other things, that there ought to be community service in all of our schools, something that we're finally getting around to.

I thank all of those who are here. I see so many people out here in this audience who have done so much to help our young people, our teenagers, live better lives. I see one of the founders of the City Year program in Boston. I see a man who has adopted a huge number of children, along with his wife, and personally made sure that they got through their teenage years. There are many, many stories here. I'm grateful to all of you.

I'm very grateful to Secretary Shalala and Secretary Herman and our National Service Chairman, Senator Harris Wofford and Deputy Attorney General Holder and Janice Lachance and all the others who are here from the administration—the Deputy Director of our drug office, Donald Vereen. And thank you, Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones. I thank you all for what you are doing.

I want to thank the panelists and those who will come on afterward. And I think we ought to give one more hand to the families that were in the film, that walked in with Hillary and me. They did a great job. [*Applause*]

You know, we've worked very hard on these family issues for a long time, and Hillary has done so for 30 years. But the way I see this as President, as well as a parent, looking ahead to the kind of America we're trying to build in the new century, when I became President, we had to worry about whether everybody who wanted or needed a job could get one. And that was very important. And the dignity of work is very impor-

tant to families. It helps to define the shape of family life in ways that are by and large positive.

I'll never forget once when I was Governor, I had a panel of former welfare recipients that were in the work force, and one of my colleagues asked the lady from my State, said, "Well, what's the best thing about having a job." And she said, "The best thing about it is when my boy goes to school and they say, 'What does your mama do for a living,' he can give an answer."

But by the same token, we live in a country that's very good at creating jobs but is not as good at providing family supports, in which people are busier and busier, and in which virtually everybody has some trouble balancing work and family during the period of the child's life. Even parents who are staying at home have trouble doing it.

And it is a problem that is more severe for single parents and people that have more than one job or people that have trouble getting around. It's a problem that's more severe for people that work for very modest incomes. But I don't think I know any parents who are working who have not had some periods in their lives when they worried whether they were letting their kids down because they weren't spending enough time with them or whether there were too many forces out there that were kind of undermining that.

And one of the things that I have learned in ways large and small over an unfortunately increasingly elderly existence—[*laughter*—] is that everybody has got a story—everybody. And every child has a spark inside. And I believe that everyone has a role to play and ought to be given a chance. And as important as work is—and I say that coming from a family of workaholics—the most important work that society does is still to raise children. And if that work is done well, the rest of it pretty well takes care of itself.

And so we're here, basically, to do all the things that Hillary said. I think when a tragedy befalls a child, or a child is involved in a tragedy, a school shooting or this terrible incident at the Washington zoo, it throws it up in large relief. But I think that one of the things we ought to do in beginning this conference is to take a more balanced view.

And I want to be very brief because I want you to have the maximum amount of time with the keynote speaker and with the panelists. But I think it's important that we have a balanced view of what teenage life is like today.

And I asked the Council of Economic Advisers to actually get me a statistical portrait of teenage America. And here is a brief summary. The good news is that the teenagers are far healthier, more prosperous, and look forward to more promising lives than ever before in our history. The economic rewards of education are at an all-time high. Teens have responded by completing high school and enrolling college at record rates.

Last year, for the first time in the history of the country, the high school graduation of African-Americans and the white majority was almost statistically identical. The dropout rate among Hispanic young people is still too high, but that's largely explained, I think, by the fact that we have still a very large number of Hispanic children in our schools who are first-generation immigrants whose first language is not English, and they come from families that are struggling to make ends meet, and very often they drop out to go to work still. But we're making progress there, as well.

More teenagers than ever before volunteering to serve through community service; many harmful behaviors are actually on the decline, including youth violence, homicide, suicide, teen pregnancy, and, in the last couple of years, drug use: that's the good news.

The report also highlights some significant challenges. There are still significant opportunity gaps between white students and students of color. Teen smoking, drug use, and pregnancy are still far too high. And despite a marked decline in teen homicide over the past few years, still far too many communities are scarred by gun violence.

Interestingly enough, statistically, the Council of Economic Advisers found that gun-related teen deaths from deliberate acts and from accidents are highly correlated with gun ownership and possession rates. In States with fewer guns in fewer households, there are fewer gun deaths.

Perhaps the most empowering finding in the new report is the extent to which parents

have the opportunity to guide their teenagers properly. Sitting down to dinner can have an enormously positive impact. The report found that teenagers who had dinner with—listen to this: The report found that teenagers that had dinner with their parents 5 nights a week are far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide, and drugs. This holds true for single-parent, as well as two-parent families, across all income and racial groups. Now obviously, if that is not possible, and sometimes it's not possible, then it's really important to find some way to fill that gap, but it's a stunning statistical finding.

For the past 7 years, the First Lady and I have worked with our administration to try to support parents' efforts to raise healthy, hopeful, and responsible children. I'd also like to acknowledge the invaluable efforts of Vice President and Mrs. Gore, who have had—even before he joined me, they were sponsoring a family conference every year in Tennessee to deal with these issues. It's really one of the most astonishing, consistent commitments, I believe, in the country. And they've done a world of good, and I'm very grateful to them.

I'll always be proud that the first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act, a law that now has given more than 20 million Americans the opportunity to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave without losing their jobs. And I remember when I signed it, it had previously been vetoed on the theory that it would hurt the economic growth of the country. If that's what it was designed to do, it's been a very poor failure. *[Laughter]*

What it has done is to prove that it's good economics to balance work and family, that the more parents can succeed at home, the more free they are, psychologically, to be productive at work, and we ought to do more.

I have asked the Congress to include more firms in the family and medical leave law and to expand the purposes for which people can take family leave. We have also tried to give States the flexibility to use funds in Federal accounts to help to finance paid leave. We've worked hard on this, and I think it's very important that we recognize that the United States has done a great job at creating jobs,

but we still give far less support to the responsibility of balancing work and family than virtually every other industrialized country in the world. And it is very important to do that.

We've also worked hard to turn teenagers away from unhealthy lives toward healthy futures. The rate of drug use has been cut, in part, by the powerful antidrug messages that have been broadcast, and some of you here have helped us with that. We have done our best to engage the tobacco industry in what has been a fairly epic and sometimes frustrating struggle to reduce teen smoking. We made the single largest investment in children's health care since Medicaid was created. And we're working to get more of our kids—and increasingly, I hope, this year, their parents—enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program. And we're working to make our schools safer.

I think that we also need comprehensive strategies to stem violence both in and out of schools. Our program would dramatically expand quality after-school programs. When I started, we had a million dollars for after-school programs; then we went to \$20 million; then we went to \$200 million. This year we've got \$400 million in after-school programs. And I've proposed a billion dollars, and if we pass it, we'll be able to say that every child, at least in every troubled neighborhood in the United States of America, can be in an after-school program. This is a big deal, and I hope you will support it.

I also want to say a word of thanks to all those who have supported AmeriCorps, including City Year and its other components. We've now had more than 150,000 young people earning money for college while serving in their communities. And we're trying to get more and more people to start earlier, to get high school kids, junior high school kids, involved in community service.

Maryland has become the first State in America to require community service as a condition of a high school diploma. And listen to this: The study found that teens who participate in service projects in their communities are 75 percent less likely to drop out of school, because they're connected in a way that I think is profoundly important.

Hillary talked about the work we're doing with the industry to give parents the tools to protect their children in the new media age. I do think we need a voluntary system that goes across TV, movies, and video games. If we can find some way to develop that, it would make a lot of sense. There's a lot of information coming at parents. You know, I try to sort it all out when I see it. And I think it would be better if there was—it's almost like you need a dictionary to explain the differences in the TV ratings and movie ratings and the video game ratings. So we have to find some way this can be made more usable.

And today I want to just mention two things that we're trying to do to help parents and their teenagers. First, I'm signing an Executive order to prohibit discrimination against parents in the work force of the Federal Government. Believe it or not, there are still some employers who are reluctant to hire or to promote employees who have children at home. Some of you may have experienced this yourselves. The goal of this order simply says, no glass ceiling for parents. The job they're doing at home is more important, anyway, and if they can do your job, you ought not to stop them.

Second, I am pleased to announce that our National Campaign Against Youth Violence, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and Tobacco-Free Kids, and the National Government have teamed up to produce a comprehensive guide to help parents support their teenagers through this crucial and often difficult developmental period.

Now, I want to introduce our keynote speaker now and say I'm sorry that I can't stay for the rest of the day, but after he speaks, I'll have to leave. But let me say that I want to thank you for coming, again. I want to thank so many of you here for a lifetime of commitment. People ask me all the time, why are we focusing on these things when all the indicators are good and things are going better? This is the time to be thinking about—I will say again—how we can deal with the significant challenges of this country. And anybody that thinks that we've done everything we need to do to help the parents with teenagers hasn't had teenagers and hasn't been around lately.

It seems to me that if we can't deal with these big social issues now, when we're prosperous, when we're doing well, if we can't strengthen the bonds of our community now, when will we ever get around to doing it? That's why we're here.

I want to introduce a person who embodies much of the good that's going on to help parents through having the village do its part, in the First Lady's words, to raise our children. Ben Casey is the president of the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas. He has degrees in psychology and counseling from UCLA and Chapman College. He currently oversees programs—listen to this—145 program centers that serve a quarter of all the families in the greater Dallas region. We've asked him to speak to us today about his extensive experience with teens, the wise new poll which also has some important findings about the way teens and parents view their communication and time together.

And let me just finally say, Mr. Casey, as I bring you up, every minute I have ever spent with young people, as President and before, but especially as President, has reaffirmed to me how special they are, what enormous potential they have. Even the ones that can't make it really want to and wish they could. And what a profound responsibility we have. And I want to honor you, sir, because you spend every day trying to make sure we don't lose a single one.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to children's advocate David A. Hamburg, president emeritus, Carnegie Corp. of New York. The President also referred to Executive Order 13152—Further Amendment to Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in Federal Government, published in the *Federal Register* on May 4. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks to the Council of the Americas 30th Washington Conference

May 2, 2000

Thank you very much. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. And thank you, Buddy MacKay, for that fine introduction. That introduction was a classic example of Clinton's third law of politics: Whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. [*Laughter*] They will always make you look good in good times and bad, whether you deserve it or not.

I want to thank the Ambassadors of Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil, who are here, for their interest and their presence; and all the people in the State Department who work on the Americas. David Rockefeller, I want to thank you for taking the lead 35 years ago now in establishing the Council of the Americas. And I want to thank the Council for its support of our efforts, beginning with NAFTA, alleviating the financial crisis in Latin America, the free trade area of the Americas, and the Caribbean Basin Initiative, as well as our efforts with Colombia.

I want to thank Buddy MacKay for his work as my Special Envoy and especially for the work he's doing now on Capitol Hill as our point person for the Caribbean Basin Initiative. I'd also like to thank my former Chief of Staff and the first Special Envoy to Latin America, Mack McLarty, for the work he has done. And let me say, the two of them together, I hope, will convince the next President and all future Presidents, without regard to party, that we have made a change in the configuration of the White House which ought to continue. I think that for decades to come, every President should have a Special Envoy to the Americas, because we have a special relationship with the Americas. And I hope those of you in this room of both parties who agree with that will do what you can to see that it happens after next January. I think it's a very, very important thing to do.

Let me say to all of you, especially to you, David, and to all of you who have been involved in this endeavor for a long time, you had the vision to see that North and South, in this increasingly small globe of ours, could come together, and that free trade could be a force for peace, as well as prosperity, the basis of our partnership across the whole range of other areas in this hemisphere. You saw that in the middle of the cold war when most people only saw the world divided by East and West here in the United States. Developments have proved that you were visionary, and we are grateful.

We are also grateful today in the United States for the extraordinary success that our economy has enjoyed and for the ability it has given us to play a positive role in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, for democracy and open markets.

I think it is very important today that we ask ourselves what we propose to do with this prosperity and whether we really understand the role that our engagement in the world and our trade with other nations clearly has played in our prosperity and what responsibilities that imposes upon us in terms of our future.

We have benefited immensely from trade. There is no question that we have the longest economic expansion in history because we got rid of the deficits, and we've run 3 years of surpluses in a row and paying off \$335 billion of our debt, and we've got low interest rates. There is no question that our investment in science and technology, our reform of our telecommunications system, and our continued commitment to education is important. But everyone should understand that our commitment to expanding trade, including not just NAFTA and joining the WTO but 270 other agreements, has helped us not only to find new markets for our products and services but, by keeping our own markets open, has kept inflation down as our economy has grown.

The two most significant things that have allowed the longest economic expansion in history for America to be long has been the enormous increase in productivity because of technology and the fact that we have permitted ourselves to have inflation-free

growth because we've kept open markets with a responsible financial policy.

I hear—so many times people talk about trade only in terms of exports, because that sounds good politically, and when you say you're importing a lot, that doesn't sound good politically. But our imports have helped us a lot. They've kept inflation down. And they've made our people's dollars go further. And they've enabled us to keep growing without inflation. And along the way, they've helped our trading partners to lift their own well-being. Our two top trading partners today are our neighbors to the north and to the south. And during most of the last decade, our trade with Latin America grew faster than any other region of the world.

So we have been very fortunate. During the period since NAFTA entered into force, our exports to Canada and Mexico have gone up almost 80 percent. Our employment has skyrocketed. Canadian employment has jumped by more than one million overall, and Mexico's employment has climbed by one million. NAFTA played a major role in this.

It has set the stage for much of what has followed. During the Mexican financial crisis in 1995, we offered a loan package that wasn't too popular at the time. I always laugh about it. When Bob Rubin came to see me about it with Larry Summers, as I remember there was a poll in the paper that day that said by 81 to 15, the American people thought it was a bad idea for us to give financial assistance to Mexico. And I thought to myself, this is what's wrong with polls. If we don't help Mexico and Mexico and Brazil and Argentina and the rest of Latin America and half the other developing economies of the world go in the tank and our economy nose-dives, it will be 100 to nothing, people think it's a bad idea that we let the world economy go to pieces. And I am very glad that what we did worked. I think the Mexican Government and the Mexican people deserve a lot of credit for a painful recovery, in which they paid back their loans with interest and ahead of schedule.

Then, 3 years later, our hemisphere was hurt by a crisis half a world away, in Asia. But I'm glad that we worked to keep our markets open. And I still believe our choice

for more trade, not less, contributed to minimizing the impact of the Asian financial crisis and enabling those countries to pull out of that crisis more quickly.

That doesn't mean that the size of our trade deficit is not a source of concern to me; it is. But I'm convinced the only way it will get smaller is when our partners, both to the south and around the world, grow wealthier and stronger, so that they can consume more of their own production and buy more of ours. I think the decision we made for open markets has plainly been the right decision, not simply for the United States economy but for the rest of the world. And I am absolutely confident it's the right decision going forward.

Right now I think we're making very good progress in moving the Caribbean Basin initiative through Congress. It is tied, as all of you know, to the Africa trade bill, which is also, I believe, very, very important to us in terms of our long-term security interests and very important in terms of our fulfilling our responsibility to Africa. I think there is every likelihood now that that bill will be on my desk for signature by the end of the month. And I think it is high time.

I know I don't need to plug that legislation here, but the nations of the Caribbean have suffered quite a lot economically and have come under enormous pressure to become way-stations for narcotrafficking. And we need to do more for them. I believe this bill is a good bill, much better than it was about to be a few weeks ago. I hope you will all support it, and if you can help me pass it quickly, I'd be grateful.

I also want to affirm that we are still determined to meet the goal we set at the Miami Summit of the Americas in December of 1994, to achieve a free trade agreement by 2005 that will embrace the entire Americas. The world's largest trade zone, 800 million people investing in each other's future, enriching each other's lives, advancing each other's interests.

Negotiators are on schedule to complete and present a draft agreement to the trade ministers next April in Argentina. It will also be presented then to the heads of state at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec. We must stay on track to do this by 2005. The

date should not slip, and I am confident we will do so.

I think a lot of people over-read the meaning of the failure of Congress to renew fast-track authority. The truth is, there was a fight largely along partisan lines over the content of that authority and whether the President should be given explicit authority to negotiate trade agreements that included environmental and labor conditions. I thought that fast-track authority was a lousy vehicle on which to wage that fight, even though I was sympathetic with the substance of the argument. I still believe that.

But you should not believe that because the legislation didn't pass over philosophical and partisan differences on that issue, that the United States is any less committed to finishing the Free Trade Area of the Americas or that, because it didn't pass, any agreement we make in the context of the Free Trade Area of the Americas is less likely to pass Congress. That is not true.

And you know that we're having an election this year. You may have noticed that. And there will be a lot of differences between the nominees and the parties over a lot of issues. But I am very gratified that there is no difference on this. You are going to have an American President committed to a Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005. And if it doesn't happen, it will not be the fault of the executive branch of the Government of the United States of America. We know this is the right thing to do.

And I just want you to know that. And I will try to find other ways to manifest that before I leave office. And there are some, but the most important one, I think, would be the passage of the CBI-Africa trade bill. But I ask you to—you know, we're having the same argument now with China and the WTO, where there are people who have honest differences over the way the World Trade Organization operates. They think it's too closed, too undemocratic, too private, and I agree with them. But voting against this is a lousy way to litigate that issue.

So parliamentary processes are often uneven and awkward, and many times people in parliaments throughout the world find the only forum they can for the fight they think that needs to be waged. But I think it's very

important that you understand that what that fast-track battle was about. It was about the philosophical differences in our country over whether trade agreements should include labor and environmental conditions and whether the President should be given explicit authority to negotiate on that basis. It didn't have anything to do with people not really wanting a Free Trade Area of the Americas.

I don't agree with the fact that it wasn't extended, and I am sympathetic, as all of you know, to the idea that if the world becomes closer-knitted, we don't live by bread alone. It's inconceivable to me that we will have a global economy without having more and more of a global society. That will happen in some way, in some form, at some pace. But it shouldn't turn us against trade.

Similarly, it's inconceivable to me that the WTO, as it becomes more important, won't have to become more open and more democratic, but that's not an excuse for sticking it to China after China has made good-faith efforts to open its economy and to give access to the other members of the world trading community.

So I think it's important to understand these debates are going on, but this does not mean that the United States is not committed to a Free Trade Area of the Americas. It is profoundly important. It is important economically. It is also important politically.

One of the things that I'm very concerned about in Latin America is that, with all the triumph of democracy—34 of 35 leaders democratically elected, people now expecting to choose their leaders and chart their future and shape their destinies—there are too many people and too many places who have still not benefited from the global economy in ways that they can touch and feel. The answer is not to turn back; the answer is to keep going forward to spread the benefits to more people. And we have to continue to push that.

I am afraid democracy, itself, could be made far more fragile if more and more people grow more and more frustrated about the circumstances of their own lives. And it would be a terrible mistake for the United States ever to send a signal that we have any policy other than full steam ahead, more en-

gagement, more support, more commitment. I think that is very, very important.

We've worked hard to uphold the rule of law in this hemisphere. We upheld that principle in Haiti. Haiti is still desperately poor and wracked with problems and facing new elections. We will do everything we can to help them stay with their democracy. But eventually, real people are going to have to feel real benefit. The answer is not for the United States, with the strongest economy, to withdraw. The answer is to deepen our engagement.

We acted again on the principle of the rule of law and democracy when we stood with the people of Paraguay to preserve democracy there when it was threatened in 1996. We attempted to uphold that policy every time it was threatened: in Ecuador, earlier this year; last month through the Organization of American States, when the countries of the hemisphere, thankfully, voiced strong support for a fair and open electoral process in Peru.

But most important, I think, today we are called upon to stand for democracy under attack in Colombia. Drug trafficking, civil conflict, economic stagnation, combined everywhere they exist and explosively in Colombia, to feed violence, undercut honest enterprise in favor of corruption, and undermine public confidence in democracy. Colombia's drug traffickers directly threaten America's security. But first, they threaten Colombia's future.

In the United States, 90 percent of the cocaine and two-thirds of the heroin seized on our streets comes from or through Colombia. Fifty-two thousand Americans die every year from drugs, about as many as died in the wars in Vietnam and Korea. It costs us more than \$110 billion a year in crime, accidents, property damage, and lost productivity.

But the price to Colombia is even higher. Last year, drug trafficking and civil conflict led to more than 2,500 kidnappings, a murder rate 10 times ours, which is virtually the highest of any country in the advanced world—terrorist activity that is now probably the worst in the world; 35,000 people have been killed and one million more made homeless in the last decade alone. Drugs

fund guerrillas on the left and paramilitaries on the right.

Honest citizens, the vast majority of the people of Colombia, are simply caught in the middle. Eight hundred to 900 passports are issued every day—every day—as engineers, architects, and doctors take their families, their wealth, their talent out of Colombia. And yet, thousands upon thousands of courageous Colombians choose to stay and fight, because they love their country, and they want to save their freedom.

President Pastrana came to office with a record of risking his own life to take on drug traffic. He was kidnapped by the Medellín cartel. As mayor of Bogotá, he saw them kill three Presidential candidates. Then he became a Presidential candidate. He used to joke that maybe that meant he was certifiably mentally unstable enough to serve. A very brave decision.

Once in office, he worked with experts in Colombia and elsewhere to put together Plan Colombia. It's a comprehensive plan to seek peace, fight drugs, build the economy, and deepen democracy. The plan costs about \$7½ billion. It includes contributions from the Government of Colombia, international financial institutions, and other donors. And I've asked our Congress to give it \$1.6 billion over 2 years. That will be a tenfold increase in our U.S. assistance to promote good government, judicial reform, human rights protection, and economic development. It will also enable Colombia's counterdrug program to inflict serious damage on the rapidly expanding drug production activity in areas now dominated by guerrillas or paramilitary groups.

We know this approach can succeed. Over the last 5 years working with the Governments of Peru and Bolivia, we have reduced coca cultivation by more than 50 percent in those countries, reduced overall cocaine production in the region by 18 percent. Drug traffickers driven from their old havens, unfortunately, now are consolidating operations in Colombia. But we have an historic opportunity and an historic responsibility to do serious and lasting damage to the international drug trade if Congress approves our package. I am convinced the rest of the world will follow suit. If we show that we are prepared

to pay our fair share of this, the rest of the world will help.

We need to help train and equip Colombia's counterdrug battalion, enhance its interdiction efforts, provide intelligence and logistic supports to the counterdrug mission, including force protection. They need this support. We can provide it, and we ought to provide it. We must not stand by and allow a democracy elected by its people, defended with great courage by people who have given their lives, be undermined and overwhelmed by those who literally are willing to tear the country apart for their own agenda. And make no mistake about it: If the oldest democracy in South America can be torn down, so can others.

Every one of you here has a deep and abiding interest in helping to see that the fight for freedom, democracy, and good government in Colombia is successful. I urge Congress to pass this package now. The Colombians waging this campaign are fighting not just for themselves; they are fighting for all of us, all of us in this room and the hundreds of millions of people we represent, and for our children.

As we know, the globalization of our societies is presenting us a lot of new challenges. The issue in Colombia is just the beginning. You will see, more and more, drug cartels, organized criminals, gun runners, terrorists, working together. The Internet will make it easier for them to do so, just as it makes it easier for you to work together to pursue your legal endeavors. But we have every reason to be optimistic, if we meet our common challenges, our common security challenges, our common environmental challenges, our common educational and health care challenges.

The mission you have championed for 35 years in this Council is closer than ever before to being successful. We have a chance to completely rewrite the future for our children because of the revolution in information, because of the biomedical revolution, because of the material science revolution. All these things together enable us to grow an economy and improve the environment, to expand trade and deepen democracy.

But when we have an opportunity like a Free Trade Area of the Americas, we have

to take it. And when we have a challenge, like the challenge in Colombia, we have to meet it.

The United States wants to do its part. It's very much in our interest to do so. We have benefited more than any other country in the world from the last decade, and we need to stand up here and do our part to be good neighbors and to help other people benefit as well.

But we need all your help. We have to win in Colombia. We have to win the fight for the Free Trade Area of the Americas. We have to prove that freedom and free markets go hand-in-hand. That's what you believe, and we're going to be given a chance to prove it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Loy Henderson Auditorium at the State Department. In his remarks, he referred to Assistant to the President and Special Envoy to the Americas Kenneth H. (Buddy) MacKay; David Rockefeller, founder, Council of the Americas; Ambassadors Guillermo Gonzalez of Argentina, Luis Alberto Moreno of Colombia, Alfredo Toro of Venezuela, and Rubens Antonio Barbosa of Brazil; former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin; and President Andres Pastrana of Colombia.

Statement on Signing Legislation Amending Certain Federal Reporting Requirements

May 2, 2000

Today I signed into law S. 1769, a bill to continue a number of existing Federal reports scheduled to expire on May 15 of this year, as well as modify certain reporting requirements related to two of these reports.

New section 2519(2)(b)(iv) of title 18 of the United States Code provides for general reporting by the Department of Justice of law enforcement encounters with encrypted communications in the execution of wiretap orders. In signing S. 1769, I state my understanding that the reporting required by section 2519(2)(b)(iv) is limited to general aggregate data concerning the total number of times law enforcement encountered encryption and the total number of instances in which encryption prevented access to plain text. The reporting requirement of S. 1769

does not require specific case-by-case or order-by-order reporting, which could jeopardize law enforcement sources and methods and provide clear direction to criminals seeking to use encryption to hide their unlawful conduct.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 2, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1769, approved May 2, was assigned Public Law No. 106-197.

Proclamation 7301—Older Americans Month, 2000

May 2, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Older Americans are a treasured link to our past. With courage, hard work, and unwavering devotion to family, community, and country, our older citizens helped to make the 20th century the American century. They preserved our freedom through the crucible of World War II; opposed Communist aggression in Korea and through the long, dark years of the Cold War; marched for labor reform and civil rights; raised their families, volunteered in their communities, and often postponed their own dreams to fulfill the dreams of their children. Their character, values, and patriotism laid the foundation for the peace and prosperity we enjoy today.

Older Americans have indeed contributed much to the story of our past; and they have much still to offer our future. Today, people are living longer, more active, and more independent lives than ever before, and one in four Americans between the ages of 65 and 69 has a job, either part-time or full-time. Many older Americans want to work, are able to work, and have skills and experience that businesses need in today's booming economy.

Recognizing the changing role of older men and women in our society, this year the Congress unanimously passed, and I was pleased to sign into law, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000, which ushers

in a new era of opportunity for older Americans. Before passage of this landmark legislation, seniors who continued to work after age 65 risked having some of their Social Security benefits withheld until they stopped working or turned 70 years old. By eliminating this confusing and outdated retirement earnings test, the new legislation will ensure that millions of older workers who wish to continue working will be able to keep their full Social Security benefits regardless of their age or earning level.

It is appropriate that we enact this new law in the year when we celebrate the 65th anniversary of Social Security and the 35th anniversary of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act. Millions of older citizens have been assisted by these programs, and, as the baby boom generation ages, millions more will be relying on them in this new century.

To recognize the profound debt our Nation owes its older citizens, and to prepare wisely for the impact that increasing longevity will have on nearly every aspect of our society in the coming years, we must reaffirm our commitment to saving Social Security, strengthening Medicare—including a prescription drug benefit—and modernizing, improving, and reauthorizing the Older Americans Act. We must also enact my Administration's long-term care initiative, which, among other important measures, provides tax relief and support services to the millions of family caregivers who devote countless hours to helping older loved ones remain in their homes and communities. By doing so, we can both honor the immeasurable contributions that older men and women bring to our national life and ensure that they lead independent, active, fulfilling lives for many years to come.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2000 as Older Americans Month. I urge Government officials, business people, community leaders, educators, volunteers, and all the people of the United States to celebrate the contributions older Americans have made, and

continue to make, to the progress and prosperity of our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 3, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 4.

Proclamation 7302—Jewish Heritage Week, 2000

May 2, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

For centuries, Jews from every corner of the globe have come to America seeking the right to worship in freedom and to pursue their individual hopes and dreams in peace. For many, the journey was a desperate flight from oppression and persecution to a new life in a new country. Bolstered by powerful family and community ties and drawing strength and hope from their ancient religious traditions, Jews in America not only survived the difficult transition, but also thrived.

From science and the arts to business and the law; as teachers, physicians, journalists, judges, musicians, and policymakers; from neighborhood stores to the corridors of Congress; from the Armed Forces to the Supreme Court, generations of American Jews have succeeded in every sector of our society. And the rewards of that success are shared by us all. Our Nation has benefited immeasurably from the character, values, and achievements of our Jewish citizens.

Building on the Jewish tradition of hospitality toward strangers and acutely aware of the long and tragic history of prejudice and persecution against their people, Jews in America have committed themselves to tolerance, justice, human rights, and the rule of

law. American Jews have shared their resources generously with health and human services programs, civil rights groups, educational institutions, arts organizations, and so many more. In communities across our Nation, in small towns and big cities, synagogues and yeshivas have become centers of community service and civic responsibility.

During Jewish Heritage Week, let us acknowledge and give thanks for the many contributions that Jews have brought to our national life and character, and let us celebrate the rich religious and ethnic threads that Jewish men and women have woven into the tapestry that is America.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 7 through May 14, 2000, as Jewish Heritage Week. I urge all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 4, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5.

Executive Order 13152—Further Amendment to Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in Federal Government
May 2, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, and in order to provide for a uniform policy for the Federal Government to prohibit discrimination based on an individual's status as a parent, it is hereby or-

dered that Executive Order 11478, as amended, is further amended as follows:

Section 1. Amend the first sentence of section 1 by substituting "sexual orientation, or status as a parent." for "or sexual orientation."

Sec. 2. Insert the following new sections 6 and 7 after section 5:

"Sec. 6. 'Status as a parent' refers to the status of an individual who, with respect to an individual who is under the age of 18 or who is 18 or older but is incapable of self-care because of a physical or mental disability, is:

- (a) a biological parent;
- (b) an adoptive parent;
- (c) a foster parent;
- (d) a stepparent;
- (e) a custodian of a legal ward;
- (f) in loco parentis over such an individual; or
- (g) actively seeking legal custody or adoption of such an individual.

"Sec. 7. The Office of Personnel Management shall be authorized to develop guidance on the provisions of this order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of an individual's sexual orientation or status as a parent."

Sec. 3. Amend section 4 by substituting "and appropriate to carry out its responsibilities under this Order." for "appropriate to carry out this Order."

Sec. 4. Renumber current sections 6, 7, and 8 as sections 8, 9, and 10, respectively.

Sec. 5. Add a section 11 to read as follows:

"Sec. 11. This Executive Order does not confer any right or benefit enforceable in law or equity against the United States or its representatives."

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 2, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 3, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 4.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
Significant Narcotics Traffickers
Centered in Colombia**

May 2, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 2, 2000.

**Memorandum on the White House
Program for the National Moment
of Remembrance**

May 2, 2000

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive
Departments and Agencies*

Subject: White House Program for the
National Moment of Remembrance

As Memorial Day approaches, it is time to pause and consider the true meaning of this holiday. Memorial Day represents one day of national awareness and reverence, honoring those Americans who died while defending our Nation and its values. While we should honor these heroes every day for the profound contribution they have made to securing our Nation's freedom, we should honor them especially on Memorial Day.

In this time of unprecedented success and prosperity throughout our land, I ask that all Americans come together to recognize how fortunate we are to live in freedom and to observe a universal "National Moment of Remembrance" on each Memorial Day. This memorial observance represents a simple and unifying way to commemorate our history and honor the struggle to protect our freedoms.

Accordingly, I hereby direct all executive departments and agencies, in consultation with the White House Program for the National Moment of Remembrance (Program), to promote a "National Moment of Remembrance" to occur at 3 p.m. (local time) on each Memorial Day.

Recognizing that Memorial Day is a Federal holiday, all executive departments and agencies, in coordination with the Program and to the extent possible and permitted by law, shall promote and provide resources to support a National Moment of Remembrance, including:

- Encouraging individual department and agency personnel, and Americans everywhere, to pause for one minute at 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day, to remember and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to provide freedom for all.
- Recognizing, in conjunction with Memorial Day, department and agency personnel whose family members have made the ultimate sacrifice for this Nation.
- Providing such information and assistance as may be necessary for the Program to carry out its functions.

I have asked the Director of the White House Millennium Council to issue additional guidance, pursuant to this Memorandum, to the heads of executive departments and agencies regarding specific activities and events to commemorate the National Moment of Remembrance.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 3.

**Remarks at the Audubon Elementary
School in Owensboro, Kentucky**

May 3, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. I am delighted to see you all here. I think we should give Karen Cecil another round of applause. She did a great job, didn't she? [Applause] Superintendent Silberman, you might ought to just put her on the road as an advertising for the district.

I'm delighted to be here with all of you. I want to thank Governor Patton and Judi Patton for, first of all, for many years of friendship and support, and for, Governor, your truly magnificent leadership in this State. I have served—I was a Governor for 12 years, and I have served with over 150 Governors. And since I've been President 8 years, I guess I've known about 100 or so more. So I have some experience in this. He's one of the best I've ever seen, and I thank him very much. Thank you.

I thank your Lieutenant Governor, Steve Henry, for being here. And my longtime friend and also fellow former colleague, John Y. Brown, thank you, Governor, for coming. I'm glad to see you. And Senator Wendell Ford and Jean, I'm glad to see you. We miss you in Washington. I had to be funny Saturday night; they don't laugh enough since you came home. *[Laughter]* And we miss you.

I want to thank Attorney General Chandler and Treasurer Miller and Speaker Richards for being here, and the other State legislators who are here. And, Mayor Morris, thank you for welcoming me, along with the City Council. And I thank the Board of Education for their good work. I want to thank the AmeriCorps volunteers who are here for the work they do in the America Reads program. And thank you, Superintendent Silberman, and thank you, Diane Embry, for the work you do.

I've been in so many schools over the last 20 years, I can be in one for 5 minutes and know whether it's doing well or not. And there are a lot of rules, and you heard some of them today, but one of the things that Diane Embry did not say is that you nearly never have a good school unless you've got a great principal. And it's obvious that you've got a great principal here.

And I'd like to thank the bands who played. And most of all, I'd like to thank Crystal Davidson for letting me come into her class and read with her students. We read a chapter from "Charlotte's Web," a wonderful book. And Crystal said it was the students' favorite chapter. It's called "The Miracle," and it's about how Charlotte the spider weaves a magic web that says, "some pig." And everybody thinks that it's the pig that's special, not the spider, and as a consequence

the pig is not sent off to make bacon. And it's a pretty good story for real life, I think. *[Laughter]* I may recommend it to the Congress when I get home. *[Laughter]*

I am told that I'm the first President to come to Owensboro since Harry Truman. He always did have good judgment, Harry. But I have known about Owensboro for a long time, now. The Baptist minister that married Wendell and Jean Ford was my next-door neighbor in 1961. And his daughter graduated from high school with me and became one of my best friends and now is very active in the national adult literacy movement. So there's something in the atmosphere around here that promotes good education. I understand Lieutenant Governor Henry's mother was a 25-year veteran of the school system here in this county. So I'm delighted to be here.

I am on the first stop of a 2-day tour to highlight for the American people the good things that are happening in education in America and the challenges that are before us. I want people all across this country to know that there are places where people, against considerable odds, are bringing educational excellence to all our children. I want people to know this because the great challenge before us is how to get the reforms that worked in Audubon Elementary School into every elementary school in America.

And the first thing that you have to do if you want to achieve that goal is to know what was done and to believe it works. I came to Kentucky to show America how a whole State can identify and turn around its slow performing schools with high standards and accountability, parental involvement, and investments to help the schools and the students and the teachers meet the standards. After I leave you, I'm going on to Davenport, Iowa, to highlight the importance of having good school facilities. And this is a big issue, too. The average school building in America is over 40 years old; in many of our cities, the average school building is over 65 years old. We have school buildings in some of our cities that can't be wired for the Internet because the building just can't accommodate it. We have school buildings in New York

City still being heated with coal-fired furnaces. We have elementary schools in America with 12 or 13 trailers out back because there are so many kids in the schools. So I'm going to Iowa to try to emphasize that.

And then tomorrow I'm going to St. Paul, Minnesota, to visit the first public charter school in America, which was basically created to give more accountability with less bureaucratic paperwork, and I'm going to talk about that. And then I'm going to Columbus, Ohio, to talk about the importance of teachers and results in the classrooms.

Dick Riley and I have been working on this for over 20 years, since we were young Governors together in 1979. We met in late 1978, when we went to Atlanta—they had a conference to show us how to be Governors. They recognized that there was a difference between winning the election and doing the job. *[Laughter]* And for over 20 years we've been wrestling with the challenge of how to improve our schools and how especially to give people who live in communities where there are a lot of lower income people the same excellence in education that every American has a right to.

And because he's from South Carolina and I'm from Arkansas, we feel a lot of affinity with Kentucky. I have been here—I came to Kentucky for the first time in 1979. I served with five Kentucky Governors, and I feel like, since Paul has been so close to us these last 7 years, I've served with six. And I wanted to come here because I believe so strongly that we can have the kind of educational excellence we need for every child in the country if people will take the basic things you have done here and do them.

I believe that intelligence is equally distributed throughout the human race, and I think educational opportunity ought to be also equally distributed. And I do want to say just one thing about Dick Riley: I don't think there's any question that even my political opponents would admit that he is the finest Secretary of Education this country has ever had.

Governor Patton talked about a decade of commitment to excellence since you passed your landmark reform bill in 1990. But he was on a committee called the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence back in

the 1980's, so he's been at this a long time, too. And I guess the first thing I would say to people all across America who are interested in this: This is not a day's work or a weekend's work or a month's work. You've got to make a long-term disciplined commitment to your children. And I thought one of the best things about what Karen Cecil said was how she charted the improvements in this school through the lives of her children. It was personally very moving to me, but it also made the larger point that if you really want excellence in education, you have to be prepared to pay the price of time and really work at it.

Now, here's what Kentucky did—a lot of you know this, but I think it's worth repeating for the audience across the country interested in this. First, in 1990 you set high standards for what all Kentucky children should know. Second, you identified the schools where year after year students didn't learn enough to meet those standards. Third, you held the schools accountable for turning themselves around, with real consequences for the failure to do so, from dismissing principals and teachers to allowing parents to transfer children into higher-performing public schools. And fourth, you provided the investment and other supports necessary, which your principal and your parent have identified here today, to turn the schools around, from more teacher training to high quality pre-school, after-school, and summer school programs, to the latest educational technology. You have to do all of these things.

The results have been truly extraordinary. You know, because we're all here today with our friends from the media who will put this story out around the country, I want every American who doubts that we can provide excellence in education to listen to these Kentucky numbers. In 1996, Kentucky identified 175 schools needing major improvement. Two years later—in 2 years, 159 of those schools, 91 percent, had improved beyond the goals you set for them.

Audubon Elementary, where we are today, is a particularly dramatic example. Now listen to this; this is what this school did. This school went from 12 percent of your students meeting or exceeding the State standards on writing tests to 57 percent, from 5 percent

meeting or exceeding the State standards in reading to 70 percent—I saw that today—from zero students meeting or exceeding the State standards in science to 64 percent. This school is now the 18th-best performing elementary school in the State, despite the fact that two-thirds of your students qualify for free and reduced-price school lunches. That is truly amazing.

In fact—this is also very interesting—you can say that—I know that people who don't agree with what we're trying to do will say, "Well, so what? You know, they have Einstein for a principal there or something." [Laughter] And you may. But listen to this. In this entire State, 10 of the 20 best performing elementary schools in science—in science—are schools where half the students are eligible for free and reduced-price schools lunches. Don't tell me all children can't learn. They can learn if they have the opportunity and the system and the support.

Income is not destiny. You have proved that all children can learn, and you have also proved that public schools can succeed. Therefore, in my judgment, the answer to excellence for all our children is not to take money away from our schools through vouchers but to combine money with high standards, accountability, and the tools teachers, children, and parents need to succeed. Because all children can learn, and because both the children and the Nation need for all children to learn in the 21st century information economy, I think turning around low performance schools is one of the great challenges this country faces in the 21st century.

And I want to go off the script here for a couple minutes to tell you, you know, I'm not running for anything this year, so I can say this, I hope, with some credibility. In times of adversity, people tend to pull together and do what has to be done. You had a terrible tornado here in January. I know it was awful for you. We tried to give the support that we were supposed to give at the national level. But I'm sure you were amazed at the community response. I'm sure you were all inspired by it. At times of adversity, we find the best in ourselves.

Sometimes we are most severely tested in good times, when it's easy for our attention to wander, for our concentration to break,

for our vision to fade. Now, this country is in the best economic shape it's ever been in, and all the social indicators are moving in the right direction. And now is the time to ask ourselves, what's really out there for us to do? How are we going to meet the challenge of the aging of America when all the baby boomers retire? We don't want to bankrupt our kids and their ability to raise our grandkids. Therefore, we should lengthen the life of Social Security and make sure Medicare is all right—I think add a prescription drug benefit.

How are we going to continue to grow the economy at the end of the longest expansion in history? I think we have to sell more of our stuff overseas, but we also have to—as I said in Hazard, Kentucky, last summer—we've got to bring economic opportunity to the places that have been left behind. It's inflation-free economic growth. How are we going to lift our children out of poverty and give them all a world-class education? Those are three of the biggest challenges this country has.

When we were worried about unemployment, when we were worried about crime never going down, when we were worried about welfare roles exploding, it was hard to think about these big long-term challenges. Well, things are in hand now. We're going in the right direction. This is the best chance anybody in this gym today will ever have in your lifetime to deal with these big challenges.

And so I—that's another reason I'm here today. We can do this. We can give all our kids a world-class education. And if we're not going to do it now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to doing it? We cannot afford to break our concentration. Now is the time to say, thank you for this good time, to be grateful to God and to our neighbors and to all the good fortune we've had, and then do the right thing by our kids. This is the best time we'll ever have to do this, and so—[applause]. Thank you.

I can also tell you, we don't have unlimited time to do it. We've got the biggest school population in our history. It's finally, the last 2 years, been bigger than the baby boom generation. It is far more diverse. The school district just across the river from Washington,

DC, in Alexandria, has kids from 180 different racial-ethnic groups, speaking 100 different first languages. And the country will grow more diverse.

Now, in a global society, that's a good thing. Just like you want to have computers way out in the country, because they're connected to the world, right? This is a good thing, not a bad thing. But only if we have universal excellence in education.

Now, the other thing I'd like to say is, when Dick and I started doing all this, and John Waihee was elected the next year, back in the early 1980's and the late seventies, we were struggling to try to figure out what to do. Even when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued in 1983—and a lot of us responded to it; we tried basically to just do what they said. We didn't even have—many States didn't even have basic, adequate graduation requirements for high school.

But we've now had 20 years of serious effort at educational reform. So we not only have good economic times, we have the knowledge that we didn't have even 10 years ago about how to replicate what you have done here. And that's another reason we do not have any excuse for not doing this. We know what works. And what you've done here will work in any community in the country.

Will it have to be modified for the people that live there and the community conditions? Absolutely. But you know, I used to frequently visit an elementary school in Chicago, when the crime rate was really high, in the early nineties, in the neighborhood with the highest murder rate in Illinois. And the principal was an African-American woman from my home State, from the Mississippi Delta. And all the parents were in the school. They had a school dress code. They had no weapons in the school. They never had any violent incidents. They had a zero dropout rate, and they performed above the State average, just like you are. So we would see this from time to time. We would come across these jewels in the rough. But nobody could really figure out, for a long time, how to make this universal.

We know, now, what the basic things you have done are and how to make them available in every school in the country. We do

not have an excuse any longer not to do that. You have to set high standards. You have to have accountability. You have to train and pay decent teachers and principals. You've got to provide the technology, and you have to have the support staff. And you have to have the parental involvement and the community support. And kids have to have the extra help they need to meet the standards. You shouldn't declare children failures when the system doesn't work. So it's okay to hold the kids accountable, but you've got to give them the help they need to make it.

Now, that works—invest more, demand more. For 7 years in our administration, the Vice President and I and Secretary Riley and the others, we've worked to give States like Kentucky the tools you need to do the job. When we were cutting spending like crazy to turn deficits into surpluses, we still had nearly doubled the national investment in education and training. We required States to set academic standards, but Secretary Riley got rid of nearly two-thirds of the regulations on States and local school districts, to reduce the unnecessary paperwork and to focus on what was really critical.

And we've also worked to help you reduce class size. I was thrilled that—you know, I didn't think of you as a Clinton teacher, but —[*laughter*]—I'll take it any day of the week. I think it's wonderful, and I'm honored that you're there.

But when I was in Crystal's class today, and all those kids, every one of those children read to me. Every one of them. Now, some of them had a little more trouble than others, partly because of the arcane nature of the book we read and the way they were talking about Desotos and Studebakers and Packards—[*laughter*]—and not Isuzus and Hondas and other things. But every one of those children was in to reading and obviously had received individual attention. Because—I think there were 19 students in that class today, and you can't do that with 40 kids. So this is a big deal.

So we're into our third year now of trying to fund 100,000 new teachers, to help to reduce the class sizes in the early grades so that the young people can learn to read. And I'm also glad that young people like Crystal

Davidson want to be teachers and are dedicated to it, because we're going to have a lot teachers retiring in the next few years.

We've also supported the America Reads program. We have these volunteers here from AmeriCorps. There are 1,000 colleges now in America where young people are working in the elementary schools of our country. In addition to that, you have RSVP programs, Retired Senior Volunteers, which I think is a sponsor of the program here in this county, and other groups, church groups, other people all across this country helping. And I think that's very important.

I said I was going to the charter school in Minnesota. We had one when I became President; there are 1,700 today, and we think we'll have 3,000 school starts next year. We've really worked on this.

The Vice President fought very hard to get something called the E-rate in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which enables schools like this to hook the classrooms up to the Internet and to get a discount to do so. It's worth about \$2 billion a year, so that the poorest schools in the country can afford, just as the wealthiest schools can, to hook up their classrooms to the Internet.

When we started in '93, there were only 3 percent of our classrooms with Internet connections. Today, nearly 75 percent have. Only 16 percent of the schools had even one connection; today, 95 percent do, including 90 percent in low income areas in America. So this is making a difference, and it's very important.

Now, across the country math and reading scores are rising; 67 percent of all the high school graduates are now going to college. That's 10 percent more than in 1993. Part of that is because we tried to open the doors of college financially to all Americans with the creation of the HOPE scholarship which is a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, which makes community college at least virtually free to most families, and another tax credit for junior and senior years and for graduate school. There are 5 million families taking advantage of it already—it's just been in since '98.

And we've expanded the Pell grants; we've created education IRA's; we've cut the cost of the student loans through the Direct Stu-

dent Loan Program by \$8 billion. Students have saved \$8 billion on the program and lower interest costs on student loans, in just 6 years. And I'm trying to get the Congress this year to allow the cost of college tuition to be tax-deductible up to \$10,000 a year. And if we do that, we do that one last piece, we will really be able to say that we have opened the doors of college to every American family, and everybody will be able to go, and money should not be an obstacle. So we're trying to get this done.

Okay, that's the good news. Now, what's the bad news? The bad news is that you're here, and we're celebrating, but there are still a whole lot of schools in America, hundreds of them, that fail to give children the education that you give the children here in Audubon. And in this economy, that is bad for them and bad for the rest of us, because we live in an economy in which it's not only what you know that counts, it's what you're capable of learning.

The whole nature of work is being radically revolutionized by information technology. It's accounted for 30 percent of our economic growth in the last 8 years, even though people working directly in information technology are only 8 percent of the work force. But if you work in a bank, if you work in an insurance company—in my part of the country, if you drive a tractor—your life has been changed by the way computers work.

And this means that it's not only necessary to be able to know certain things, you've got to have these learning skills that kids get in grade school to keep on learning for a lifetime. It is profoundly important.

And we do need what the Vice President has called a revolution in education. But it's not a revolution to find something that doesn't exist. It's a revolution to take what works here and put it everywhere. That has always been the great challenge of American education. It's just that we weren't sure what it was we wanted to put everywhere. Today, we are.

And again I tell you, there will never be a better time economically to do it, and we don't have any excuse not to do it, because we know what works. After 20 years, we know what works.

Last year, Dick Riley and I sent Congress an educational accountability act that would fundamentally change the way we spend the \$15 billion we give to our schools, not to take it away from our commitment to helping lower income communities and kids but to say we're going to invest in what we know works, and we're going to stop investing in what we know doesn't work. It would essentially require States that take Federal money to do what you have done in Kentucky, to identify low performing schools, to develop a strategy for turning them around, based on a set of standards and an accountability mechanism.

It would require the ending of so-called social promotion but, again, not branding the children failures. It would require that only if you also had after-school, summer school, tutoring, the support services necessary for the children to succeed. And it would empower parents, by encouraging more parental involvement in schools and guaranteeing report cards to the parents on school performance, not just the students' performance, compared to other schools.

It would provide funds to make sure that all teachers are trained in the subjects they teach—which is going to become a huge problem when all these math and science teachers retire in high school, getting people who are actually certified and trained to teach the courses they're supposed to be teaching—and provide more support for school districts for extra training.

I've asked Congress to double our investment in the education accountability fund to help people turn around low performing schools or shut them down. And I've asked Congress to double our investment in after-school and summer school programs.

The Federal Government, when I became President, was spending nothing on these programs. Then we—I got an appropriation for \$1 million, and then \$2 million, and then \$40 million, and then \$200 million. Then it's \$400 million this year—\$450 million. And I'm trying to get \$1 billion. If we get \$1 billion, we can provide summer school in this country to every student and every poor, low performing school in the United States of America. That is very, very important.

So to make this strategy work, we've got to have the courage to do what Kentucky is doing, to identify the schools that aren't performing, not where the students are failing, where the schools are failing the students. The grown-ups have to take responsibility for this. Then we can help to turn them around. Today I am directing—that's a misnomer, because we agreed in advance, Secretary Riley—to begin to provide an annual report, national report on low performing schools, to tell us for the first time how many of our Nation's public schools are failing, where they're located, what the States are doing to turn them around.

Second, as we press Congress to pass our accountability legislation, we must ensure that the States do what they're supposed to do under existing laws. Therefore, I'm directing the Secretary to send teams to States to make sure they're meeting their responsibilities on low performance schools, to work with States to apply the kind of successful strategies that have worked here, to identify Federal resources like these after-school grants which States can use to turn the schools around.

I never cease to be amazed when I go places that there are people that literally don't know we have this money there for them. I'll bet you there are people that need this teacher money that haven't applied for it. And I nearly know there are people that need this after-school money that haven't applied for it, because we have grown this program very fast in response to a clear national need.

These actions will help us to spread the lesson we have learned during these last 7 years. In education, investment without accountability can be a waste of money. But accountability without investment is a waste of effort. Neither will work without the other.

Ten years ago, when things looked pretty grim for public schools, before a lot of these reforms got underway, the late head of the American Federation of Teachers, Al Shanker, who was a great friend of mine and a very vigorous advocate of high standards and accountability, said something to his fellow teachers that I thought was very moving. He said, we have to be willing to tell the American people the bad news about our

public schools so that when the schools begin to turn around and we have good news to report, they will believe us.

Well, today here in Kentucky and in other places across America, there is good news to report. The American people believe that. But they expect us to keep at it until the good news is the real news in every single school in this country.

Thank you. Thank you for what you have done to help make that happen. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Karen Cecil, parent, who introduced the President; Stuart Silberman, superintendent of schools, Daviess County; Gov. Paul E. Patton, and his wife, Judi, Lt. Gov. Stephen L. Henry, and former Gov. John Y. Brown of Kentucky; State Attorney General A. B. Chandler III; State Treasurer Jonathan Miller; State Speaker of the House Jody Richards; Mayor Waymond Morris of Owensboro; Diane Embry, principal, and Crystal Davidson, teacher, Audubon Elementary School; former Gov. John Waihee of Hawaii; and former Senator Wendell Ford and his wife, Jean.

Statement on World Press Freedom Day

May 3, 2000

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, I want to salute journalists in every country who dedicate their lives—and risk their lives—to increase our understanding of the world and to shine a spotlight in support of truth and accountability.

This past year around the world, from Colombia to Chechnya to Sierra Leone, more than 30 journalists were killed, many more were imprisoned, and more than 100 nations still exert forms of harassment that inhibit press freedom. Right now, Governments in Iran and Serbia are cracking down on journalists, closing news organizations, and trying to block a public dialog that is so essential to human rights and freedom.

As a nation long blessed with liberty, the United States has a responsibility to stand with those who are upholding the values we cherish, to speak up for press freedom, and to speak out against repression so that journalists can do their jobs without risk or re-

straint, and citizens have the knowledge they need to exercise the power of self-government.

Statement on the Death of John Cardinal O'Connor

May 3, 2000

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Cardinal O'Connor. For more than 50 years, he reached out with uncommon fortitude to minister the needs of American Catholics. From his first Philadelphia parish to soldiers on the battlefield, from the carnage of Bosnia to the tragedy of AIDS, he also sought out and served those most in need. His lifelong journey of faith was our Nation's blessing. From his distinguished career as a Navy chaplain, to his determination to give voice to the poor and marginalized in New York and across America, the courage and firm faith he showed in his final illness inspired us all.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and all who loved him.

Executive Order 13153—Actions To Improve Low-Performing Schools

May 3, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2000 (as contained in Public Law 106-113), and in order to take actions to improve low-performing schools, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Since 1993, this Administration has sought to raise standards for students and to increase accountability in public education while investing more resources in elementary and secondary schools. While much has been accomplished—there has been progress in math and reading achievement, particularly for low-achieving students and students in our highest poverty schools—much more can be done, especially for low-performing schools.

Sec. 2. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. (a) The Secretary of Education

("Secretary") shall work with State and local educational agencies ("LEAs") to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for providing technical assistance and other assistance to States and LEAs to strengthen their capacity to improve the performance of schools identified as low performing. This comprehensive strategy shall include a number of steps, such as:

- (1) providing States, school districts, and schools receiving funds from the school improvement fund established by Public Law 106-113, as well as other districts and schools identified for school improvement or corrective action under Title I of the ESEA, with access to the latest research and information on best practices, including research on instruction and educator professional development, and with the opportunity to learn from exemplary schools and exemplary State and local intervention strategies and from each other, in order to improve achievement for all students in the low-performing schools;
- (2) determining effective ways of providing low-performing schools with access to resources from other Department of Education programs, such as funds from the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, the Reading Excellence Act, the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, the Class Size Reduction Program, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, and to make effective use of these funds and Title I funds;
- (3) providing States and LEAs with information on effective strategies to improve the quality of the teaching force, including strategies for recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in high-poverty schools, and implementing research-based professional development programs aligned with challenging standards;
- (4) helping States and school districts build partnerships with technical assistance providers, including, but not limited to, federally funded laboratories and centers, foundations, businesses, community-based organizations, institu-

tions of higher education, reform model providers, and other organizations that can help local schools improve;

- (5) identifying previously low-performing schools that have made significant achievement gains, and States and school districts that have been effective in improving the achievement of all students in low-performing schools, which can serve as models and resources;
- (6) providing assistance and information on how to effectively involve parents in the school-improvement process, including effectively involving and informing parents at the beginning of the school year about improvement goals for their school as well as the goals for their own children, and reporting on progress made in achieving these goals;
- (7) providing States and LEAs with information on effective approaches to school accountability, including the effectiveness of such strategies as school reconstitution, peer review teams, and financial rewards and incentives;
- (8) providing LEAs with information and assistance on the design and implementation of approaches to choice among public schools that create incentives for improvement throughout the local educational agency, especially in the lowest-performing schools, and that maximize the opportunity of students in low-performing schools to attend a higher-performing public school;
- (9) exploring the use of well-trained tutors to raise student achievement through initiatives such as "America Reads," "America Counts," and other work-study opportunities to help low-performing schools;
- (10) using a full range of strategies for disseminating information about effective practices, including interactive electronic communications;
- (11) working with the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), to provide technical assistance to BIA-funded low-performing schools; and
- (12) taking other steps that can help improve the quality of teaching and instruction in low-performing schools.

(b) The Secretary shall, to the extent permitted by law, take whatever steps the Secretary finds necessary and appropriate to redirect the resources and technical assistance capability of the Department of Education ("Department") to assist States and localities in improving low-performing schools, and to ensure that the dissemination of research to help turn around low-performing schools is a priority of the Department.

Sec. 3. School Improvement Report. To monitor the progress of LEAs and schools in turning around failing schools, including those receiving grants from the School Improvement Fund, the Secretary shall prepare an annual School Improvement Report, to be published in September of each year, beginning in 2000. The report shall:

(a) describe trends in the numbers of LEAs and schools identified as needing improvement and subsequent changes in the academic performance of their students;

(b) identify best practices and significant research findings that can be used to help turn around low-performing LEAs and schools; and

(c) document ongoing efforts as a result of this order and other Federal efforts to assist States and local school districts in intervening in low-performing schools, including improving teacher quality. This report shall be publicly accessible.

Sec. 4. Compliance Monitoring System. Consistent with the implementation of the School Improvement Fund, the Secretary shall strengthen the Department's monitoring of ESEA requirements for identifying and turning around low-performing schools, as well as any new requirements established for the School Improvement Fund by Public Law 106-113. The Secretary shall give priority to provisions that have the greatest bearing on identifying and turning around low-performing schools, including sections 1116 and 1117 of the ESEA, and to developing an ongoing, focused, and systematic process for monitoring these provisions. This improved compliance monitoring shall be designed to:

(a) ensure that States and LEAs comply with ESEA requirements;

(b) assist States and LEAs in implementing effective procedures and strategies that re-

flect the best research available, as well as the experience of successful schools, school districts, and States as they address similar objectives and challenges; and

(c) assist States, LEAs, and schools in making the most effective use of available Federal resources.

Sec. 5. Consultation. The Secretary shall, where appropriate, consult with executive agencies, State and local education officials, educators, community-based groups, and others in carrying out this Executive order.

Sec. 6. Judicial Review. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 3, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:45 a.m., May 4, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5.

Executive Order 13154— Establishing the Kosovo Campaign Medal May 3, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including my authority as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Kosovo Campaign Medal. There is hereby established the Kosovo Campaign Medal with suitable appurtenances. Except as limited in section 2 of this order, and under uniform regulations to be prescribed by the Secretaries of the Military Departments and approved by the Secretary of Defense, or under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary of Transportation with respect to the Coast Guard when it is

not operating as a service in the Navy, the Kosovo Campaign Medal shall be awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who serve or have served in Kosovo or contiguous waters or airspace, as defined by such regulations, after March 24, 1999, and before a terminal date to be prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

Sec. 2. Relationship to Other Awards. Notwithstanding section 3 of Executive Order 10977 of December 4, 1961, establishing the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and section 3 of Executive Order 12985 of January 11, 1996, establishing the Armed Forces Service Medal, any member who qualified for those medals by reasons of service in Kosovo between March 24, 1999, and May 1, 2000, shall remain qualified for those medals. Upon application, any such member may be awarded the Kosovo Campaign Medal in lieu of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal or the Armed Forces Service Medal, but no person may be awarded more than one of these three medals by reason of service in Kosovo, and no person shall be entitled to more than one award of the Kosovo Campaign Medal.

Sec. 3. Posthumous Award. The Kosovo Campaign Medal may be awarded posthumously to any person covered by and under regulations prescribed in accordance with the first section of this order.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 3, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
11:45 a.m., May 4, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 5.

Remarks at Central High School in Davenport, Iowa

May 3, 2000

Hello. I think we should give Barb Hess another hand. She did a good job on her speech. *[Applause]* And your principal, Mr. Caudle, give him another hand. *[Applause]* And your great Governor, Governor Tom Vilsack, I'm glad to be here with him. Thank

you. I also want to thank the Jazz Band and the Marching Band for playing. You did a great job today. Thank you very much.

I am glad to be here. I want to say I appreciated meeting at least two of your student leaders, Kelly Witt and Ricky Harris—thank them for—*[applause]*. And I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson, Attorney General Tom Miller, Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge, and the director of education, Ted Stilwell for joining us today. And, Mayor Yerington, thank you for welcoming us back to Davenport. And the other Quad City mayors are here: Mayor Leach of Moline; Mayor Ward of East Moline; and Mayor Mark Schwiebert of Rock Island. I think I pronounced that properly, and if I didn't he can reprimand me later. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to thank your superintendent, Jim Blanche, for making us welcome here. And since we're here for construction purposes, to talk about better school buildings, I'm glad to be joined by the president of the Building and Construction Trades Union, Mr. Ed Sullivan. So thank you all for making me feel welcome.

I love this community. I came here in late 1992 on a bus with Hillary and with Al and Tipper Gore right before our election. Then I came back in 1993 after the terrible flood, and I watched you come back from that. And today I want to talk about another kind of building.

I'm in the process of going around the country for 2 days—we just left Owensboro, Kentucky. And I want to do two things. I want, first of all, to make this trip an opportunity to show America how good the young people of our country are, and how much they are learning in our schools, and how bright their future is. But the second thing I want to do is to point out what challenges are still out there if every young person in America is going to have a world-class education.

And one of the things that we know is that you are not the only group of young people in school facilities that are either overcrowded or too old or both. And if we want learning to occur, we have got to give all of our students the facilities they need.

Now, this is a beautiful old school. It's even older than the high school I went to,

which was built in 1917. I've been to the top floor. I've seen the physics lab. I went into a biology class. I went underneath the bleachers here, in the locker room. I saw where you have your meals in the cafeteria, which was built in the '85 extension. And I have been given a briefing by your principal on how you're going to handle the modernization.

But what you need to know is there are people all over this country who are in situations even more severe. In the city of Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old. In the city of New York there are still buildings heated in the winter with coal-fired furnaces, where people literally shovel coal into them like they did a hundred years ago.

We have school buildings so old they can't be hooked up—they cannot be wired to the Internet. The Vice President and I have worked for 6 years to connect every classroom in America to the Internet. When we started, 16 percent of the schools were connected and 3 percent of the classrooms. Today, 95 percent of the schools and almost 75 percent of the classrooms are connected.

But believe it or not, there are some which literally can't take a connection. And I saw some of your classrooms here today that have severe limits on what can be done in terms of electricity provision.

So what's all this got to do with what we're doing now? Well, when I became President, we could never have thought of doing anything for school construction or school modernization or repairs because we had a big deficit. Today, we're in the midst of our third budget surplus. By the end of this year we will have paid off \$355 billion of our national debt. And I'm proud of that.

We are in the midst of the longest economic expansion in history. And the big question before the voters this year, and all the adult citizens of America that you young people can have an impact on—and some of you are old enough to vote now—is what are we going to do with our prosperity? So we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest female unemployment in 40 years and the lowest African-American and His-

panic unemployment ever recorded, so what are we going to do with it?

A lot of times, in free societies, when times are good, people do nothing. They just sort of hang around and enjoy it. That would be a terrible mistake, because we still have challenges. And one of the challenges we have—and everyone of you know it's true—education is more important than ever before. It's more important to you, and it's more important to your country.

We live in an information economy where what you know and what you can learn will determine in large measure the shape of your adult lives and the kind of lives you'll be able to give your own children. So one of the things that we have to do with our prosperity is to ask ourselves—let's take an inventory—where are we not giving our young people a world-class education? Why are we not doing it? And what are we to do about it?

Because if we can't do this now, if we can't make uniform excellence in education a reality in America now, at this time of historic prosperity, we will never get around to it. So we have to do it now.

One of the things that we ought to do is to make sure that we can put all our kids in facilities that are modern enough that they can be hooked up to the Internet, that people can learn, that we can do what we need to do here, not just the science classes, not just the labs but all the classes.

Let me just give you an example. I just talked to Senator Harkin about this before I came in, because he got some money for Iowa to do this; the first Federal money ever to help in school construction he got on the basis of a pilot project for Iowa. And now you heard the Governor say the State's putting money in. But 4 years ago, when we started to talk about this, the Government said it would take \$112 billion to modernize schools for all of our kids. Today, they say it will take \$322 billion.

The engineers of our country, the people charged with building things, a couple of years ago evaluated all of what we call America's infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, our railroads, our ports, our airports, our water systems. You know what? They said the worst system in the world that we had, the worst one in our country, was our school

buildings, that they are too old and not ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I have been to schools, elementary schools, in Florida—I went to a little town in Jupiter, Florida, and went to one elementary school. There were 12 housetrailer out behind the school, because the kids were so numerous, the school district had grown so much, that they couldn't go in there. Even in this school, where you've got a lot of rooms, you have a lot more students here than the school was built for. And it's one of the things the teachers talked to me about today.

So, why am I here? Because I hope that America will see this problem and this opportunity through you and your school, thanks to our friends in the media. And because I have given the Congress now for one more year, my proposal, which basically would say: One of the things we ought to do with our prosperity is to help build or massively overhaul 6,000 schools, and we ought to give the States enough money to repair another 5,000 schools every single year for the next 5 years. The students of this country and their families deserve it.

Back in 1907 this high school was called, I quote, "a high school for the future." Back then the population of Davenport was 39,000, about a third of what it is today, and Central High had half the number of students it does now. It was a high school for the future. You have some new renovations planned over the next 2 years, which I hope will make it a high school for the future again. But I want every single school in America to be a school of the future. You need it. You deserve it. And if the Congress will pass my proposal, we will help you get it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:27 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara Hess, teacher, who introduced the President; Henry L. Caudle, principal, Kelly L. Witt, student body president, and Frederick L. (Ricky) Harris III, senior class president, Central High School; Gov. Tom Vilsack and Lt. Gov. Sally Pederson of Iowa; Mayor Philip Yerington of Davenport, IA; Mayor Stanley F. Leach of Moline, IL; Mayor Bill Ward of East Moline, IL; and Mayor Mark W. Schwiebert of Rock Island, IL; and Jim Blanche, superintendent, Davenport School District.

Remarks at the City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota

May 4, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, after Tom and Milo talked, I don't know that I need to say much of anything. I thank you for what you said and for the example you have set. And I want to say a little more about Milo and this school in a moment. I'd like to thank my friend Bruce Vento for not only doing a superb job in representing the people of his community and, indeed, the people of Minnesota in the United States House of Representatives but also being a wonderful friend and adviser to me these last 7 years and a few months. You should be very proud of Bruce Vento. He's a very, very good man. Thank you.

When Lieutenant Governor Schunk told me that she was going to visit every school district in Minnesota, I was wishing I were the Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota. That sounds like a good job to me. I thank you. And Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here today. It's good to see you again, and it's good to be back in your community.

There are a number of other people I would like to acknowledge, and doubtless I will miss some, but I'd like to thank Education Commissioner Jax for being here; and Superintendent Harvey; Majority Leader of the Senate Roger Moe. The mayor of Minneapolis I think is here, Sharon Sayles Belton; former Attorney General Skip Humphrey. I'd like to thank State Senator Ember Reichgott Junge, a longtime friend of mine, and former State Representative Becky Kelso, who were the original cosponsors of the charter school legislation. The Charter Friends National Network director, Jon Schroeder, who drafted the original Federal charter law, which we adopted. The Center for School Change director, Joe Nathan, a longtime personal friend of mine with whom I worked for many years.

And I'd like to acknowledge some people who came on this tour with me, some of whom who have been very active in the charter school movement for a long time: the president of the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington, Will Marshall; the president of the New Schools Venture Fund, Kim

Smith; the policy director of the National Urban League, Bill Spriggs; and a longtime friend and city council member from New York City, Guillermo Linares. And they're over here to my right. They've come a long way to be with you, to see this first charter school in the United States. So I hope you'll make them—[*applause*].

When I was listening to Milo Cutter and Tom Gonzalez talk first about this school, how it got started, what its mission is, and then hearing Tom talk about his life and how his then-girlfriend and present wife got him into this school, it reminded me of all the struggles that I have seen the charter school movement go through throughout the United States and reaffirm my conviction that every effort has been worth it.

There are a lot of people here in this room who have devoted a lot of their lives to trying to help young people in trouble. I was delighted to hear Milo mention Hazel O'Leary's support for this school. She was my first Energy Secretary. And I want to thank, in particular, one person who's made an extraordinary commitment to helping young people lead the lives of their dreams and avoid the lives of their nightmares, my good friend Supreme Court Justice Alan Page, who's out here. Thank you, Alan, for everything you have done.

The idea behind charter schools is that not all kids are the same. They have different needs. They have different environments. But there is a certain common level of education that all kids need, no matter how different they are. And that it would be a good thing to allow schools to be developed which had a clear mission, which could reach out to kids who wanted to be a part of that mission and who could achieve educational excellence for children who otherwise might be left behind or, to use Tom's phrase, might fall through the cracks.

It is true that when I ran for President in 1992, Minnesota had the only public charter school in the country, this one. And so when I went around the country talking about charter schools, most people thought I had landed from another planet, because most people hadn't been here. Most people still haven't been here to this school. But I knew it was an idea that had enormous prom-

ise. And some of the people involved in this enterprise have been working with me for years on educational matters when I was the Governor of Arkansas.

I also knew that if Minnesota was doing it, there was a pretty good chance it was a good idea, since the State already had some of the best performing schools in the United States. And I think the State and this community deserve a lot of credit for the general direction of education reform and rising test scores. Minnesota really is about to become Lake Wobegon, where all the children are above average. [*Laughter*] And that's good for you. Good for you.

I'm here today because I want all of America to know about you, and through you, to understand what might be done in other communities with the charter school movement, to give all of our children the education they need and the education our country needs for them to have in a 21st century information economy.

This is a good time for us to be doing this. Our economy is in the best shape it's ever been. We have been working for 20 years on school reform; no one can claim anymore they don't know what works. We now have enough evidence that the charter school movement works if it's done right, as it has been done here. And we have the largest and most diverse student body in our history, which means there are more different kinds of people that may learn in different ways and have different personal needs, but they all need—I will say again—a certain high level of educational attainment.

The strategy that clearly works is accountability for high standards, with a lot of personal attention and clear support for the education mission of every school. We've tried to support that now for 7 years. The Vice President and I have supported everything from increasing Head Start to smaller classes in the early grades to funds to help all of our States and school districts set high standards and systems for implementing accountability for those standards to opening up the doors of college to more Americans.

Here in St. Paul, our movement to put 100,000 teachers on the streets—in our schools, I mean—has led, I think, to 23 more teachers being hired. And here in this city

the average class size in the early grades is 18. If that were true in every place in America, the children would be learning and all of our third graders would be able to read, more of them would stay in school, fewer of them would drop out, more of them would do well. So I want to congratulate you on making good use of that, as well.

We've also tried to make sure all of our schools were wired to the Internet. We're going to do a little work on the Internet later this morning. When the Vice President and I started and we got the so-called E-rate passed in Congress, which allows lower income schools to get subsidies to be wired and to use the Internet, to access it, there were only 16 percent of the schools and 3 percent of the classrooms connected. Today, 95 percent of the schools and almost 75 percent of the classrooms are connected. And I think by the end of this year, certainly some time next year, we will have every classroom in America, certainly every school, connected, except those that are literally too old and decrepit to be wired. And unfortunately, there are some, and I've been out on another crusade to try to build new school facilities and have the Federal Government help in that regard, too.

But we've come a long way. And yet, we know that there are still schools which aren't performing as they should. Even though test scores are up, even though college-going is up, we know that there are schools which aren't performing. And I wanted to come here today because of what you've done, because you've proved that charter schools were a good idea.

As I said, when I started running for President, there was a grand total of one charter school—you. You were it. Now there are over 1,700 in America. And we have invested almost half a billion dollars since 1994 to help communities start charter schools. That's why there are over 1,700, and I'm proud of that.

And this is actually National Charter School Week, which is nice for me to be here by accident in this week. And I can say that—you know, my goal was to at least fund 3,000 or more by the time I left office. And I believe we are going to meet that goal, and one

of the reasons is that you have set such a good example.

Now, what I want to talk about today is how the charter schools work a little—I want to say a little about that. And then I want to answer—if you'll forgive me for doing it, since you don't have this problem—I want to answer some of the critics of the charter school movements who say that not all the schools have worked.

Schools like City Academy, as I said, have the flexibility to reach out to students who may have had trouble in ordinary school experiences. At the same time, very often we see charter schools provide an even greater atmosphere of competition that induces kids to work harder and harder to learn. Studies show that charter schools are at least as racially and economically diverse as the public schools, generally. And here in Minnesota, they're more diverse than average schools.

Surveys show the vast majority of parents with children in our 1,700 charter schools think their children are doing better academically in those schools than they were in their previous schools. There are long waiting lists to get in most charter schools all across the United States.

Now, does that mean every charter school is a stunning success? No. But I don't think that anyone can cite any endeavor of life where everybody is doing a great job. The idea behind the charter schools was never that they would all be perfect, but that because they were unlike traditional schools they had to be created with a charter and a mission that had to be fulfilled. If they were not successful in that mission, they could be shut down or changed, or the children could go somewhere else.

And so that they would be under a lot more—pressure may be the wrong word—but the environment would be very different—that if they didn't work, the kids wouldn't be stuck there forever, that there would always be other options, and that they, themselves, could be dramatically transformed.

Now, the one problem we have had is that not every State has had the right kind of accountability for the charter schools. Some States have laws that are so loose that no matter whether the charter schools are doing

their jobs or not, they just get to stay open, and they become like another bureaucracy. Unfortunately, I think even worse, some States have laws that are so restrictive it's almost impossible to open a charter school in the first place.

So the second point I want to make to the people, especially to the press folks that are traveling with us who have to report this to the country, is that not only has this first charter school in America, City Academy, done great, but Minnesota's law is right. You basically have struck the right balance. You have encouraged the growth of charter schools, but you do hold charter schools responsible for results. That's what every State in the country ought to do.

And I think, indeed, we should build the level of accountability you find here in the charter school system into all the schools in our system. That's what I'm trying to get Congress to do. Bruce and I have been working for a couple of years on an educational accountability act, which basically would invest more money in what we know works and stop investing money in what we know doesn't work, the kind of direction taken not only by the charter schools but by this State, in terms of standards, accountability, not having social promotion but not blaming kids for the failure of the system, permitting after-school, summer school programs, and real support for people like you.

Unfortunately, this week the Congress is—the majority is trying to pass legislation that neither puts more money or more accountability into the system. But I'm still hopeful that we'll be able to pass a good bill that really works before we go home.

Let me finally say that there are some people who criticize charter schools by saying that even though they are public schools, they amount to draining money away from other public schools. That's just not true. You would be in school somewhere. And if you were, whether your school was doing an effective job or not, the tax money would be going there. The charter school movement, if it works, can help to save public education in this country, by proving that excellence can be provided to all children from all backgrounds, no matter what experiences they

bring to the school in the first place. That's what this whole thing is about.

My goal is to get more money and more people involved in the charter schools movement, to break down the walls of resistance among all the educators to it, and to get community people all over the country more aware of it. Today we are going to release about \$137 million in grants to support new and existing charter schools in 31 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. I am going to ask the Secretary of Education today to develop guidelines for employers and faith-based groups so that they will know how they can be actively involved in supporting the charter school movement.

While charter schools have to be non-sectarian, there is a role, a positive role, that faith-based groups can play. And employers, we find around America, increasingly are willing to provide space and other resources to help charter schools get started. In nearby Rockford, Minnesota, for instance, there is the Skills for Tomorrow School, sponsored jointly by the Teamsters Union and the Business Partnership. Union, corporate, and small business leaders have helped to develop the school. They also provide students with internships and take part in judging whether they have met their academic graduation requirements to ensure that they have the skills they need to succeed. I think the guidelines I'm calling for today will get more businesses and more faith-based groups involved in the charter school movement.

We have learned now for 7 years that charter schools will work if you have investment and accountability, and if you make them less bureaucratic and more mission oriented. I'm very proud of the fact that in our administration the Secretary of Education has reduced the regulatory burden on local schools and States in administering Federal aid by about two-thirds, while we have doubled the investment in education for our schools.

And I'm very proud of the fact that long ago, even though I wasn't given the privilege of coming to this school, I heard about Milo; I heard about the City Academy; I heard about the charter schools movement. I talked to Joe Nathan. I talked to Ember about it and a number of other people. And I ran for President in 1992 pledging that if the

people voted for me, we would have more of these schools. And over 1,700 schools later, thanks to your example, my commitment, I think, has been fulfilled and American education has been advanced. I only hope that my presence here today will help to get us to 3,000 and will help to get us to the point in America where every school operates like a charter school.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Tomas Gonzalez, 1994 graduate, who introduced the President, and Milo Cutter, founder and director, City Academy; Lt. Gov. Mae Schunk of Minnesota; Mayor Norm Coleman of St. Paul; Christine Jax, commissioner, Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning; Patricia Harvey, superintendent, St. Paul School District No. 625; State Senate Minority Leader Roger D. Moe; former Minnesota State Attorney General Hubert (Skip) Humphrey III; and State Supreme Court Justice Alan Page.

Webisode Chat With Tracy Smith of Channel One in St. Paul

May 4, 2000

Ms. Smith. So now we're going to go live, to the live webcast. So everyone out there watching us on your computer, thank you so much for joining us. Welcome to everybody. Thank you, City Academy. And thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Tracy. Are we ready to start?

Ms. Smith. We are ready to start.

The President. Well, let me begin by thanking Channel One and the Channel One schools and all those who are taking part in this Presidential Webisode Chat.

This has a rich history, really. Fifty years ago and more, President Roosevelt used the radio to bring democracy into the homes of the American people, with his Fireside Chats. Thirty years later, President Kennedy regularly used televised press conferences to do the same thing. And I think it's quite appropriate to use this newest medium of communication to answer more questions from more students. And I think we ought to get right to it.

All of you know that I'm speaking to you from the City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. It was the Nation's first charter school. I believe in these schools, and I've tried to promote them and want to do more, and that's why I'm here.

The most important thing that we can do today is to reach out and answer questions from the students of America, so let's begin. How do you want to do it, Tracy?

Education and Moving Out of Poverty

Ms. Smith. Well, our first question is actually from Amy, who is from City Academy—we do have it in the computer here; it's question number zero—which is, what more can education do to improve people's lives and move them out of poverty?

The President. Well, I think the obvious answer is just to look at the difference in the job prospects and the income prospects of people who have education and people who don't. Education in this economy, where we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, if you have enough education you have almost 100 percent guarantee that you'll have a good job and you can move out of poverty.

But it is, by and large, necessary to do more than graduate from high school. Most people, to have good job prospects, need at least 2 years of college. And I have worked very hard in the last 7 years to open the doors of college to everyone. We've increased the Pell grants. We've made student loans less expensive. And we have given a tax credit worth \$1,500 a year to virtually all Americans for the first 2 years of college. So the most important thing for you to know is, you'll get out of poverty if you have an education, but you need more than high school.

Technology in Education

Ms. Smith. All right, great. A tech question, of course, since we're talking to a bunch of techies out there. This is question number 200: Mr. President, my math teacher uses technology to teach us every day. Do you think this is an important part of learning?

The President. Yes. I don't think it's a substitute for knowing the basics, but it facilitates learning.

And one of the things that we know now—and I bet a lot of you here at City Academy have learned this—one of the things we know now is that people learn in different ways. And sometimes, like in grade school, some kids will be identified wrongly as being slow learners or maybe not very smart when in fact they learn in different ways. We know that some kids learn by repetition, doing basic math on a computer, better. Some kids learn by listening better. Some learn by reading better. So I think that's important.

But the main thing that technology is going to do for education is something entirely different. Look at this. We've already got over 2,000 questions. We're talking to people all over the country here. Because of technology, we can bring what's in any textbook, anyplace in the world, not only to a place like the City Academy in St. Paul; we can bring it to poor villages in Africa, in Latin America, in east Asia. Technology can enable us to bring all the knowledge stored anywhere to anybody who lives anywhere, if they have the computer—the poorest people in the world. And so it is going to be, I think, the most important fact about education for the next 20 or 30 years.

Government Initiatives in Computer Availability

Ms. Smith. I guess the followup question to that is question number 721: Mr. President, how can the Federal Government help provide enough money to have enough computers in school for everyone to be able to have access to a good computer?

The President. Well, let me tell you what we have done. In 1996 we passed something in Congress called the Telecommunications Act. And Vice President Gore led our fight to require in that law something called the E-rate, the education rate, to guarantee that all schools and libraries could afford to logon to the Internet. It's worth over \$2 billion a year in subsidies to schools. That's why 95 percent of our schools are hooked up now to the Internet, connected to the Internet, because they can afford it.

I have also worked very hard to try to get the Government to give all the computers we could to schools and to go out and work with the private sector to get more com-

puters in the schools. Frankly, the big issue now is making sure that the teachers are well-trained to maximize the potential of the computers and the educational software. You know, most teachers will tell you that in every school, there are always a few kids that know more about all this than the teachers do. So what we've had to do is to go back and re-emphasize training the teachers.

And let me just say one other thing. I believe that the next big move will be to try to make personal computers in the home available to more and more people who can't afford them now, lower income people.

When Tom was up here talking earlier, he said he was born in Mexico. I went to a school district in New Jersey where most of the kids are first-generation immigrants. And the school district, with Bell Atlantic, put computers in the homes of more and more of the parents so they could talk to the principals and the teachers during the day. And it had a dramatic impact on the learning of the kids and on reducing the dropout rate. And the kids, of course, could then use the computers at home as well.

So I think that's the next big frontier. Can we make the use of the computer as universal as the use of the telephone is today? I wish I were going to be around, but I think that's a big frontier the next President should try to cross.

Ms. Smith. This is question number 2,173. We are getting a lot of questions today. This is from Lawrence, from Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The President. I've been to this school. This is the town that Hillary and I were married in. I lived there when I went home to Arkansas and taught in the university.

School Violence

Ms. Smith. All right. He's in the seventh grade, and he wants to know what you plan to do about making students feel safer in today's classrooms.

The President. Well, first of all, I think the only way to make you feel safer is to try to make sure you are safer. But you should know that, in spite of these horrible examples of school violence we've seen—we just celebrated the anniversary of Columbine; we had

the terrible incident in Arkansas and Mississippi, Oregon, lots of other places—that, overall, school violence has gone down. And I think the main thing you have to do is to keep guns and weapons out of schools, to try to keep people off the school grounds that don't belong there, and to have a zero-tolerance policy for guns in the schools and for violence.

Then I think it's also important to have positive ways of dealing with conflict. I think there need to be peer mediation groups in schools. I think students need to have access to counselors and, if they need it, to mental health services. I think that we have to teach young people that there are nonviolent ways that they can resolve their legitimate conflicts, and there are nonviolent ways they have to get their anger and frustration out.

So I think there's partly a law enforcement strategy to keep guns and knives and other weapons out of the hands of kids at school, to keep people off the school grounds who shouldn't be here. Then I think there has to be a positive human development effort to get people to adopt nonviolent strategies for dealing with their anger, their hurt, and their conflicts.

Education Infrastructure

Ms. Smith. Let's do 201. This is from Elena—I hope I'm saying that right: President Clinton, do you think that the physical condition of a school building has an effect on learning in the classroom?

The President. Yes, I do. If it's bad enough—in two or three ways. First of all, I think if a school is in terrible physical condition, when children go through a school every day, if the roof is leaking and the windows are broken and it's stiflingly hot—I mean, young people are not stupid; they're smart. They say, "Okay, all these politicians and teachers say we're the most important people in the world. If we're the most important people in the world and education is the most important thing in the world, why are they letting me go to school in this wreck of a building where I'm miserable?"

The second problem is, it's actually harder to teach in difficult physical facilities. I was at a school—actually, a very beautiful school yesterday in Davenport, Iowa. It's 93 years

old. And there are rooms in that building where there were no electrical outlets in the walls, and there are all kinds of problems there. It's a magnificent building. They shouldn't tear it down, but they need to modernize it.

And so I do, I think it makes a big difference. That's why for over 2 years now I've been trying to get Congress to adopt a plan to let the Federal Government help build 6,000 new schools and help repair 5,000 more every year for the next 5 years, because it's a terrible problem. The average school building in Philadelphia is 56 years old—65 years old—in New Orleans, over 60 years old. In New York, there are school buildings that are heated still by coal-fired furnaces.

And also, there are all these overcrowded schools. I went to a little grade school in Florida with 12 housetrailer out behind it to house the kids—12—not one or two. So yes, I think it makes a big difference.

School Uniforms

Ms. Smith. Let's go to—here's one I know you have an opinion about—2,987. This is Brandon: What do you think about school uniforms?

The President. I support them in the early grades. I think—and I'll tell you why. I have been a big supporter of school uniforms—well, I support them for high schools, too, if people want them. But let me just say, we have a lot of evidence that particularly in elementary and junior high schools, school uniforms perform two very valuable functions: They promote discipline, and they promote learning. Why? Because in the early years, school uniforms remove the economic distinctions between kids.

I went to a junior high school out in California, in the third-biggest school district in California, where they have a school uniform policy. And I had an inner-city young boy talking and a young girl who was probably upper middle class. And both of them loved the uniform policy, because they said it removed the distinctions between kids, and it removed the pressure to try to show where you were in some economic or social hierarchy by what you were wearing.

But I also can tell you, there is lots and lots of evidence that it reduces conflict and

violence and promotes an atmosphere of discipline among younger people. So I think—you know, I really think that having that policy is good. I've seen it all over America. I've done everything I could to promote it. I've been ridiculed and attacked and made fun of for promoting it, but I believe in them. I think they do good. I do.

Ms. Smith. We've done lots of stories on that. I don't think every kid in America agrees with you, but—

The President. I know they don't. [Laughter] You ought to see my mail about it. [Laughter]

Community Service

Ms. Smith. Question number 296. This is from Melinda, from Dublin High School. We don't have where Dublin is.

The President. Ohio, I think, isn't it?

Ms. Smith. Is it Ohio?

The President. I think so.

Ms. Smith. Very good. Do you believe that students should be required to do community service as a part of their core curriculum?

The President. Yes. That's the short answer. I do. Maryland is the only State now that requires community service as a requirement. To get a high school diploma in Maryland, at some point you have to do some community service.

You know, I've been a big supporter of community service. I founded the AmeriCorps program, and now 150,000 young people have served their communities and earned some money to go to college through various AmeriCorps projects. We started a program called America Reads. There are now people from 1,000 different colleges going into the grade schools of America, helping make sure all of our third graders can read—and a lot of retired groups, too.

I believe community service is one of the most important things that happens in America to bind us together across the lines that divide us. And in 1987, 13 years ago, I was on a commission on middle schools which recommended that community service be made a part of the curriculum. So I've been a believer of this for a long time.

I would leave it to the schools or the school districts to decide what the young people should do. But I think it does us all good to get out and deal with people who are drastically different from ourselves and who—no matter how bad we think our lives are, there is always somebody with a bigger problem and a bigger need and a bigger challenge. And I just think it's good for people to serve other people in the community. So I would make it a part of the curriculum. I would.

Educational Opportunities for the Disadvantaged

Ms. Smith. Okay, this is 3,348, from Mission Junior High, in Texas: What is being done to ensure that economically disadvantaged students are provided the opportunities for higher education?

The President. Good question. Let me give you all the answers. This has been a big priority of mine. Here's what we've done. Since I've been President, we have increased the number and the amount of the Pell grants, which is the scholarship the Federal Government gives to the poorest students. We have also changed the student loan program, so that it's now cheaper to take out a loan if you get one of the so-called direct loans, issued directly from the Federal Government. The interest rate is lower. And then when you get out of school, if you take a job that has a modest salary, you can limit your repayments to a certain percentage of your income. It's saved, in 5 years, \$8 billion in student loan costs for America's students.

We've raised the number of work-study positions from 700,000 to a million. And we passed the HOPE scholarship. That's the biggest deal. It's a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, and then also for the junior and senior year and for graduate schools you get a tax break. And I'm now trying to get Congress to adopt a law which allows people to deduct up to \$10,000 in college tuition from any tax burdens they have. So I think that will help.

If that passes, I think we can honestly say that income is not a barrier to going to college. Between the scholarships, the loans, the work-study programs, and the HOPE scholarship tax credit, which 5 million families have already used, that's why college-going—

67 percent of the high school graduates in America are now going on to college. And I want to get it up as close to 100 as we can get it. So if you have any other ideas in Mission, Texas, let me know. But we've done a lot on this, and I think it's very important.

Quality Teachers

Ms. Smith. Question 4,641, this is Mike from Buffalo: What do you think the Federal Government can do to attract quality teachers to inner-city public schools?

The President. Well, we've got a little program we started a couple of years ago—this is a really good question—where based on the old health service corps idea, where we would pay off people's loans to medical schools if they'd go practice medicine in isolated, rural areas or inner city areas.

So we have a small program now to say to young people, if you'll go back and teach in an inner-city school where there is a teacher shortage, we'll pay off your college loans. And I think that will help. I would like to see that program dramatically expanded.

I think the other thing is, though, we're going to have to pay these young people more if we want them to do that. In the next few years we could have a real problem with teacher shortage, because we've got the largest student body in American history. You finally—all of you are bigger than the baby boom generation I was a part of, for the last 2 years. We have about 2 million teachers slated to retire over the coming 5 to 8 years. And we have a greater need for teachers than ever before because our student bodies are more diverse, in terms of language and background and culture.

So I think the States and the Federal Government are going to have to look at this. I'm trying to put 100,000 more teachers out there now in the early grades. I know the Vice President has said that he believes we ought to have—the Federal Government should help the States and school districts hire 600,000 more over the next 4 years after that. But this is going to be a big issue.

My own view is, the best way to get young people to go into the inner cities, though, is to defray the cost of their own education—say, if you teach for 2, 3, 4 years, you get

this much knocked off, because I have found that there is a great desire, again, for community service. And there is a lot of interest in doing this if we can make it reasonably attractive.

Home Schooling

Ms. Smith. This is Brenna, from Lamar: President Clinton, what are your views on parents home schooling their children?

The President. I believe two or three things about home schooling. I've had a lot of experience with this, because I was a Governor at a time when this was being debated around America. I think that States should explicitly acknowledge the option of home schooling, because it's going to be done anyway.

It is done in every State in the country, and therefore, the best thing to do is to get the home schoolers organized, if they're not organized in your State, deal with them in a respectful way and say, "Look, there is a good way to do this and a not so good way to do this, but if you're going to do this your children have to prove that they're learning on a regular basis. And if they don't prove that they're learning, then they have to go into a school, either into a parochial or private school or a public school. But if you're going to home school your kids, the children have to learn. That's the public interest there."

And that's what we did in Arkansas. The Home School Association strongly supported it, accountability for what their children were learning. There will always be, in any given State, a certain percentage of people, normally a small percentage, for reasons of personal values or educational philosophy will want to do that. And most of the time they're very dedicated parents, deeply committed to what they're doing. And I can tell you this: It's going to happen regardless, so it's better to have laws which have standards on it.

From my personal point of view, I never—it wasn't an option in our family, but if it had been I wouldn't have done it because I wanted my daughter to go to school where she would be exposed to all different kinds of people and see how the larger society worked and be a part of it. But I think that

we should explicitly make that option available; we should respect the people who choose it, but we ought to say, "If you do it, your children have to demonstrate that they know what they're supposed to know when they're supposed to know it."

Ms. Smith. Just an update, we've received more than 10,000 questions so far. Pretty good.

The President. I need to give shorter answers. [Laughter]

Goals of Education

Ms. Smith. Question 4,154, this is Howard from Providence: Do you consider the goal of public education to be to make someone ready for employment, practical, or to make someone a well-rounded, enlightened individual?

The President. Both. That is, I think—when I say ready for employment, if you're talking about getting through high school, I've already said I don't think that will make most people ready for employment.

We live in a world in which what you know is important, but what you're capable of learning is even more important, because the stock of knowledge is doubling once every 5 years, more or less. So I think that being able to be a useful member of society is important. But I also think being able to be a good citizen and having a liberal arts background is important. So I think we should pursue both.

I've never thought of education as purely a utilitarian thing, just something that is a meal ticket. It also makes life more interesting. All these young people here—you know, if you develop the ability to read and to think and to feel comfortable with ideas and emotions and concepts, it makes life more interesting. It makes your own life more fulfilling. So I think education should both prepare you for the world of work and help you live a more fulfilling life and be a better citizen.

Standards Tests

Ms. Smith. Okay, this question 5,492. This is Eliza from New York: How can the testing system be changed so that teachers are not pressured to the point that they are cheating for the kids? Don't you see it as a flaw in

the system more than in the teachers? I guess they're talking about high-stakes standards testing.

The President. Yes, well, here's the problem. First of all, I think that it is almost unavoidable, if you believe as I do, that there has to be some measure at some point along the way in school of whether young people have actually learned what their diplomas say they have learned. And what I think is important—the way—I can tell you how it can be changed so that the teachers aren't pressured to cheat. You can have one or more second chances.

Ms. Smith. So if you fail a test—

The President. Yes, yes. Let me give you an example. In Chicago, for example, which most people believed a few years ago had the most troubled big-city school system in the country, they adopted a no-social-promotion strategy. And if you didn't pass the exams and make appropriate grades, you couldn't go on. But they gave 100 percent of the people a chance to go to summer school and do well. As a result of that, today, the Chicago summer school is—listen to this—it's the sixth-largest school district in America, just the kids going to summer school. But as a result of that, there aren't very many people who are held back, and that dramatically reduces the tension to cheat.

I think an even better system is to make sure that all the kids who are having trouble, and particularly all the schools that are low performing, have really rich and substantive after-school programs, weekend programs, as well as summer school programs, so that the tests measure whether the children are learning.

Look, we know nearly—literally right at 100 percent of the people can learn what they need to know to go from grade to grade. You know, this whole business that all children can learn is not just a slogan. So I think it's very important not to blame the children when the system fails them.

So the answer is—to reduce the tension to cheat, is to have a lot of second chances but to make sure that when a young person is told you get to go on because you learned something, that the stuff has really been learned.

Education Then and Now

Ms. Smith. We want to squeeze in just one more question, question 249, from Leah in Cybervillage: Mr. President, how would you compare your education in grade school to public education today?

The President. Well, first of all, in many ways, it's better today, although one of the things I will say is I was very blessed; I had great teachers. I had—my sixth grade teachers, Kathleen Scher, was typical of the teachers of the early—the first 50, 60 years in this country. She was a lady who—she never married; she lived with her cousin. They were both teachers, and they lived to be 90 years old. And I corresponded with her until she died. She came to see me once a year. We were friends, and she was a great, devoted teacher.

The discrimination against women in the workplace in the first part of this century worked to drive the smartest and most gifted and most dedicated of public servants among women into the classroom. They were teachers and nurses—women—because that's what they could do. And the end of discrimination among women, which has been a great thing for women, has given women lots of other options.

But I had good teachers. So that's the good thing I will say about that. I was very fortunate and blessed. But I went to segregated schools, which I resented at the time. I knew it was wrong, before the civil rights movement. And it's better today that we have a diverse student body, and we're all learning to live together and work together in school.

There were no computers, although we read a lot. And at the time, it was assumed that most people would not go to college, instead of that most people would. So in that sense, I think things are better today.

Now, violence was having a fist-fight on the playground. Nobody had a gun. So there was less fear. The only thing you ever had to fear was whether somebody that hated you was going to beat you up. You never had the fear that somebody would pull a knife or a gun. So I'd say those were the differences.

But if you look, on balance, we're better off today than we were when I was in grade school. We just have to deal with today's challenges. There will never be a time that's

perfect and without challenges. But we're better off being integrated than segregated. We're better off with the new technology. We're better off with the assumption that we ought to try to prepare every kid and give every child the chance to go to college. That's my view.

Ms. Smith. As you see from the number of questions, we could do this all day, but we're out of time.

The President. These are great questions—I mean, great.

Ms. Smith. Aren't they great? There are so many, one after the other.

The President. I wish that they all had yes/no answers; I'd just run down. [Laughter]

Ms. Smith. You know what, they can all E-mail you, right? [Laughter] Just kidding.

Well, I want to thank you so much for being here, Mr. President. This was a treat. I want to also thank the distinguished guests that were here, thank City Academy, thank Yahoo! for providing this chat auditorium, and of course, all of the students across the country who logged in and participated in this. Sorry we couldn't get to all of you. Great questions.

The President. Thank you. Great job. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:13 a.m. in gymnasium at the City Academy and was broadcast online via the Internet. In his remarks, the President referred to Tomas Gonzalez, 1994 City Academy graduate. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Reforming America's Schools in Columbus, Ohio

May 4, 2000

[Barbara Blake, principal, Eastgate Elementary School, welcomed participants and outlined improvements in student performance at her school. She then introduced the President, noting that she had requested information on educational reform from him while he was Governor of Arkansas.]

The President. Thank you very much, Ms. Blake. I guess I should begin by saying I'm certainly glad I answered that letter—[laughter]—so many years ago. I want to thank you

for welcoming me here. And thank you, Mayor Coleman, for your leadership and for welcoming me also. Thank you, Superintendent Rosa Smith; Representative Beatty; City Council President Habash; House Minority Leader Ford. I'd like to thank the leaders of the Columbus and Ohio Education Association, John Grossman and Gary Allen, who are here. And I'd like to thank all of our panelists who are here.

I have been on a tour these last 2 days to highlight the good things that are happening in education in America, to highlight the reforms that make these good things possible, and most important, to highlight the great challenge before the United States today to turn around all low performing schools and give all of our children a world-class education.

Yesterday morning I was in western Kentucky in the little town of Owensboro, which has had extraordinary success in turning around its lowest performing schools. In 1996, the State identified 175 of them. Just 2 years later, 159—over 90 percent—had improved beyond the goals the State set for them. In the little school I visited, where two-thirds of the children were eligible for free and reduced lunches, in 4 years they had recorded the same sort of improvements that you mentioned here, on a trend line, which proves that income and station in life are not destiny, that all of our children can learn, that intelligence is equally distributed. And that means the grownups among us have a big responsibility to give every single one of these kids, like those beautiful, bright-eyed kids that I saw in this school—and I just shook hands with every one of them—have a chance to live up to their dreams.

Then after I left Kentucky yesterday, I went to Davenport, Iowa, and I visited a 93-year-old high school finally beginning to get the renovations it needs so that students have the learning environment they need. Some of those school rooms didn't even have electrical outlets in the wall. And believe it or not, it was even hotter in the gym there than it is here today. *[Laughter]* So I'm just as cool as a cucumber now.

This morning I was in the Nation's first charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota, which is providing an excellent education to stu-

dents who were not succeeding in other public schools. That was the first charter school in the country, established in 1992. They were basically schools within the public school system set up by teachers and parents and citizens with a specific, definite mission, and schools that can be shut down if they fail in that mission.

There was one in the whole country, that one I visited today, in '72. We've invested \$500 million since then, and there are now 1,700, providing excellence in education to special needs of the people and their communities. And while I was there, I actually had a Webside Chat on the Internet with students all across America about the challenges in education. And in a matter of about 20 minutes, they sent me over 10,000 questions. *[Laughter]* So don't let anybody say the young people of America are not curious. They could ask faster than I could answer.

I really can think of no better place to wrap up my tour than here in Columbus, which has had a long history of educational intervention and innovation and excellence. In 1909, Columbus opened the Nation's very first junior high school. And now, again, you're on the cutting edge of reform and improvement.

I'm here today primarily not to talk but to listen to the panelists here about what you're doing right. But I want to say, for the benefit of the country and through the press who are here, that this community has implemented high academic standards and assessments to see if the students and the schools are meeting those standards. They've given students help to meet those standards, from after-school programs to smaller classes. Their strategy, which is our strategy in the Clinton-Gore administration, of investing more and demanding more, is working.

Now, you heard our principal talk about the advances. Just in the last 3 years, the test scores have skyrocketed, and the test scores themselves have gone up more than 200 percent. But I don't know if you listened to that—the percentage of students doing an acceptable job—listen to this—in one year—she talked about 2 years ago and last year, not this year—in one year went up almost 500 percent in reading, over 300 percent in

math, and 300 percent in science—in one year. All children can learn.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the teachers who I also met outside and to those of you who work to improve the quality of the teacher corps. Listen to this: More than a third of these teachers have a master's degree and over 10 years' experience teaching. I understand your peer assistance and review program is helping both new and veteran teachers to do better by learning from each other, something I very much believe in.

And this is very important: You have cut the attrition rate of first-year teachers by 40 percent. This is terrifically important because we have so many teachers who will be retiring in America in the next few years, and we have the largest number of students in our schools in history. So reducing the attrition rate is a big deal and something you should be very proud of.

While there is still more work to be done here and, indeed, in every school in the country, you have proved that with the right ideas and the right tools, you can do what needs to be done.

Since 1993, our administration has worked hard to make education our number one priority, not just in a speech but in reality. And I must say, I don't know that I have ever been more touched by anything I have ever seen in any school in my life as I was when I looked up—hanging from the ceiling on the corridor when I came down here—and you had put up a history of what our administration had done since January of '93 in education. I was completely blown away. I dare say that outside of Hillary, the Vice President, and Secretary Riley, you now know more about what we have done than anybody else in America. [*Laughter*]

But let me just briefly review a couple of the things that I think are important. When I came in office, we had a \$295 billion deficit. Interest rates were high. Unemployment was high. We had to get rid of the deficit. We had to keep doing things. We got rid of hundreds of programs. And as we turned a deficit into 3 years of surpluses, now this year we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt, well on our way to getting America out of debt entirely, for the first time since 1835.

We have doubled our investment in education and training. And I think that's very important.

But we also said to people that got Federal aid to education, "If you want this Federal aid, you have to have high standards for what your children should know." We've given the States the resources they need to help schools implement those standards. We've required States to identify their low performing schools and come up with strategies to turn them around.

We've helped to reduce class size in the early grades with our program, now in its third year, to provide 100,000 new, highly trained teachers in the first 3 grades. I'm happy to say that 55 of those teachers are now in Columbus, 2 here at Eastgate. And this community has taken the average class size in grades one through 3 from nearly 25 down to 15. That is, doubtless, one reason you're seeing these big improvements in students' performance, and again I applaud you for that.

When I became President, there was no Federal support for summer school programs. All these studies would show the kids that were having trouble learning forgot a lot of what they did learn over the summer. And then the teachers would have to spend 4, 6, sometimes as many as 8 weeks reviewing what was done the year before, before they could even start on what they were being held responsible to teach in the new year.

We went from a \$1 million program in 1997 to \$20 million in '98, to \$200 million in '99, to \$450 million this year. And my budget asks for a billion dollars. If the Congress will give it to me, we will be able to guarantee summer school opportunities to every student in every low performing school in the entire United States of America. It is terribly important that we pass this.

What you have done here—I know that 30 fourth graders in this school participate in such programs. I said summer school; I meant after-school, although the funds can also be used for summer school. I just came from Minneapolis, where a third of all their students are now in summer school programs, in the entire school district. Why? Because they have so many people who are

coming from other countries whose first language is not English. They would never even have a chance to not only master the language but learn what they need to learn if summer school weren't made available to them. So the after-school and the summer school programs are important.

We're trying to build or radically overhaul 6,000 schools and to modernize another 5,000 over the next 5 years—5,000 a year. We now—when I became President, we had only 3 percent of our classrooms and 16 percent of our schools connected to the Internet. Today, we have nearly 75 percent of the classrooms and 95 percent of the schools with at least one Internet connection with the E-rate, which the Vice President pioneered, that gives a \$2 billion subsidy so that poorer schools and poorer communities can afford to have their schools log on to the Internet.

So we're working on it. I have sent Congress an education accountability act that basically seeks to ratify what you're doing. It says: Set high standards; enforce them. End the practice of social promotion, but don't punish the kids for the failures of the system. Give after-school programs; give summer school programs. The kids can learn. We see it here. Have a system that works. And I hope that this will pass this year.

And let me just make two final points. As your principal said, I've been working at this a long time. I've been in a lot of schools, and I never get tired of going into them. I've shaken hands with a lot of kids, and I'll never get tired of shaking hands with them. They make us all perpetually young.

But I can tell you this: There is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1979, when Secretary Riley and I started in education reform. And there is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1983, when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued and when Hillary and I passed our first sweeping reforms at home in Arkansas.

We know what works. You're seeing what works in this school. What does that mean? It means again that the adults among us no longer have an excuse not to give these opportunities to every child in America, because now we know what works.

The second thing I'd like to say is, with the strongest economy in our history, the great test the American people face this year in the elections—and those of us who are elected officials—and as citizens is, what is it that we mean to do with this prosperity? If we're not going to do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to doing it? We're in the best shape economically we've ever been in. We can afford to do it, no matter what anybody says. And I think we ought to get about the business of doing it.

So that's why I came here, why I wanted to hear from all of you. And what the purpose of this panel is, is to sort of fill in the blanks of my remarks here so that we will have a clear sense of how far you've come, how you did it, and what we need to do from here on out.

Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to begin by asking your superintendent to speak a little, maybe in a little greater detail than I did in my remarks or even than Principal Blake did in hers, and talk about how did you decide to do what you're doing and what exactly are you doing to turn around low-performing schools? That's the big issue in the whole country.

And let me just make one other comment. I've been in hundreds of schools in so many States. Nearly every problem you could ever dream of in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. The real problem with American education is we never get our solutions to scale; that is, we don't take what we're doing really right for some people and keep on at it until it's being done for everybody, for all the kids.

And there seems to me to be a real systematic effort here. So that's what I would like for you to talk about, Dr. Smith, in whatever way you want.

[*Rosa A. Smith, superintendent, Columbus Public Schools, described the district's strategy to improve its schools.*]

The President. Yes, give her a hand. [*Applause*] That's great. Let me just emphasize one thing she said because, unless you've heard people say these things a lot, it would be easy to miss. She said that there were

three clearly defined goals, and then the second point she made I think is very important. She said, "We are using a research-based approach." That means—that's a nice way of saying what I said in more crude language, that you don't have to sort of fire a shotgun at this problem anymore. It's not like we don't know what works. There is lots and lots of research available today as a result of the serious efforts of the last 20 years.

And one of the reasons that we have not had the kind of systematic results that we're seeing here around the country is that people don't take the research and really act on it. And it's interesting, because there is hardly any other endeavor of your life that you would ignore that in. If you were starting a business and 15 people had succeeded doing a certain thing and 3 people had failed doing the reverse, you wouldn't say, "Well, I think I'll see if I can't make money doing what the three did. I think I can do it a little better."

So I think that Columbus deserves a lot of credit. I'd like to follow up by asking your principal, Barbara Blake—you've been a principal for a good while. As you pointed out, you wrote me when I was Governor and asked me about some of the things we were doing. Why do you think what you're doing now is working so much better?

[Ms. Blake attributed the improvement to smaller class size and mentor support for teachers.]

The President. Just to give you some idea of what she said, I went through those numbers a minute ago, but I can't think of how you could possibly explain a 500-percent increase in the percentage of kids reading at the appropriate level in a year other than more individual attention by someone who is a good teacher and knows how to do it.

And let me say, in this little class I visited in Kentucky yesterday, this elementary school class, all the kids and I took turns reading a chapter from the wonderful book "Charlotte's Web." And I made every child read a couple paragraphs. And some of those paragraphs are pretty tough for kids in the third grade, you know, and they all got through it. In 4 years, they had almost a tenfold increase. And you'll do even better than

that, at the rate you started. So I think this is very important. I think the smaller classes really do amount to something.

I'd like to ask Heather Knapp to speak next. She is a teacher at East Linden Elementary, and she was hired with the help of our class size reduction funds as a first grade teacher. And she teaches a class of 18 first graders, along with a 25-year veteran of the Columbus Public Schools, Karen Johnson. And you, too, have, I understand, a large immigrant population in your school. So I'd like for you to talk a little about what the impact of children whose first language is not English is and the educational process and what you're doing.

[Heather Knapp said that reduced class size enabled teachers to work with students in small groups and on a one-to-one basis and spend time helping them to assimilate.]

The President. My notes—and they're not always right, but they usually are—my notes say that if you didn't have these class size reduction funds to hire more teachers, that you and your team teacher, Ms. Johnson, would be each teaching, separately, first grade classes with more than 30 students in them. And if that's true, there would be no way in the world you could deal with all these children whose first language is not English.

Ms. Knapp. No.

The President. Yes, that's pretty straightforward. [Laughter]

Ms. Knapp. As a first-year teacher, I believe, no. [Laughter]

The President. I think many Americans have no idea just how diverse these student bodies are now. Like I said, I just came from Minneapolis/St. Paul. We think about that as sort of the capital of Norwegian America. And it still is. But there are children in the Minneapolis/St. Paul school district, combined, with native languages in excess of 100, counting all the people who come from the different African and Southeast Asian peoples who are there. And the same thing is happening all over America.

Now, a lot of these kids, once they're here for about 18 months, if they good basic grounding, start to do very well indeed. And since we're living in a global economy in an

increasingly global society, this is a great advantage for the United States. We should be thrilled by this. This is going to put us in a very good position to do very well when all these children get out of school. Ten years, 20 years, 30 years from now, our country will be the best positioned country in the entire global society if, but only if, we take care of these kids now.

Sometimes people back in Washington ask me why I spend so much time on this. You know, when Barbara introduced me, she said, "the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces" and all that. I think this is a national security issue for America. I think it's an important part of our long-term security. So I want you to keep plugging.

I'd like to ask the president of the Columbus Education Association now to talk a little bit about your teacher development strategies. Everybody who becomes a teacher knows that he or she is not going to become wealthy, but it's important to pay them enough so that they can afford to stay. But it's more than pay. People also want to feel that they're doing their job well. Most people like to get up in the morning and look forward to going to work and believe that what they do is important and know they're doing it well. And that feeling is more important for teachers probably than any other single group in our society.

So I'd like to ask Mr. Grossman to talk a little bit about how this peer assistance review program works and how it contributes to teacher quality.

[John Grossman described how the peer assistance review program provided mentors for support, training, and evaluation of first-year teachers, in partnership with the union, administrators, and Ohio State University.]

The President. Let me just follow up on that a little bit. Again, this is one of those issues—it's very hard—for example, we've got all these folks here who are reporting on this today, and it's very hard to have a blaring headline across the Columbus paper tomorrow, with an exclamation point, "Columbus Committed Only To Use Research-Based Strategies!" or "Peer Review and Assistance the Main Thing!" It doesn't have the edge,

like "Clinton Robs a Liquor Store!" or something. *[Laughter]*

As a result of that, we often overlook what matters most. But let me just tell you this. We forget how much our teachers need support and training and the time and resources to do that. I think a lot of times we just assume that, well, if you went through school and you got good grades in math and you went to an education college and you took those courses, well, obviously you can teach math. We forget, unless we've actually seen how hard they work, how much time it takes for these teachers just to get through the day, to deal with the children, give them as much individual attention as possible, give the tests, grade the tests, deal with all the other stuff they have to deal with.

I can only tell you, most people believe the United States military is a pretty efficient operation, and we fought an air war in Kosovo and didn't lose a single pilot. But let me tell you, we did lose pilots. They didn't die in that war; they were pilots that die every year in the military training of the country. And we spend a lot of your tax money just training people relentlessly, over and over and over again. We don't assume that some people are smart and some people are dumb and some people can do it and some people can't. We assume in the military that the people we accept and the people we train are capable of doing the mission that they are assigned. We don't even assume that you're either a born leader or not, and if you're not born one, you can't lead. We train people to lead, too, in the military, and they lead. And a lot of people who would never be picked as leaders, the whole time they're born until the time they join the military, wind up performing superbly.

If you look at the best run companies, they invest huge amounts of time and money in developing the capacities of their people. And we have never done this for our teachers in the sort of systematic way that we should, setting aside the time we should, investing the money in it we should. And again, it's a very hard thing for—the mayor can run for election, somebody can run for the school board, or somebody can run for President, and it's the last thing you'll ever see them say, because you can't turn it into a headline

with an exclamation or a 30-second television ad. But it matters.

That's why I wanted John to talk about it. It is so important. And it means something to the teachers. It's a way of reaffirming their significance and their capacity to grow in satisfying their own intellectual hunger. Any time you think training doesn't matter for education—suppose I would say to you, I've got a way to give you a bigger tax cut; we'll cease all training operations in the military, and we'll just take smart people and see how they do? *[Laughter]* So this is very, very important. And I thank you for that.

Mr. Mayor, tell me, what has the mayor got to do with the schools here? *[Laughter]* What is it you're trying to do?

Mayor Michael B. Coleman of Columbus. I'm asked that question often, Mr. President. *[Laughter]*

The President. They ask me, too, all the time. *[Laughter]*

[Mayor Coleman discussed the city's efforts to create and fund quality after-school programs.]

The President. Let me just say, I think that—first, I think you're to be commended, and I assure you that I will be fighting as hard as I can to get the appropriation doubled again. But as I said, in 1997, I got a million dollars out of the Congress to plan for a Federal after-school program. And then we went from \$20 million to \$200 million to \$450 million in 3 years. And we estimate that if we can get up to a billion dollars a year in Federal support for after-school, at least we'll be able to give cities like Columbus enough money to target all the schools where either the performance is the most disappointing or you have the highest percentage of low income kids.

But I think you will want to do more than that, and you'll probably have to make a case to the business community and others that it's a good economic investment for the city. But again I'll say, particularly if you have a lot of immigrant children, it's really important. These kids need as much time as they can to master the language so they can begin to learn all the other things they need to learn. And they just cannot do it in the regular day, in the regular school year.

And I'll do what I can to help you. But I think you deserve it. I think you've made the right decision about what's best for you.

Mayor Coleman. Thank you very much.

The President. I would like to call on a parent now, a stakeholder in this enterprise. Linda Hoetger—is that right? I studied German in college. *[Laughter]* Linda and her husband, Ray, have four sons, all in the Columbus public school system. Both of them volunteer to work in the school system. And their 9-year-old son at East Columbus Elementary School got a Federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant to start an after-school program. So I'd just like for her to talk to us about her work in the after-school program at her son's school. How does it work; how did it start; what does she do; what is your view of the role of parents in this?

But I would really like to begin just by thanking you and your husband for your support for the schools and for your willingness to give your time. I'd like for you to talk about what you do.

[Linda Hoetger described her experiences as a volunteer for the after-school programs, offering students tutoring and standardized test preparation services.]

The President. Is all the after-school work at the school where you work designed toward helping prepare them for the test or giving them homework assistance? Are there any other kind of things—

[Ms. Hoetger said the program also offered violence prevention classes.]

The President. I think this is really important. If I might just say, again, I've talked to a lot of young people in a lot of schools about violence, obviously because of all the very high profile tragedies we've had in our schools.

But I think it's worth pointing out that in spite of those high profile tragedies, gun violence in America is down 35 percent since 1993. And violence in the schools has declined. And I think one of the principle reasons is involving more young people in peer programs and training more young people—young people, like the rest of us—people model the behavior they see, either at home

or they learn on television or in some other way. People are not born knowing how to resolve their anger, their frustration, their conflicts in a non-violent way. And if they don't have models, if they have either destructive models or no models at all, you run the risk of having a higher incidence of violence. So I wanted you to talk about this because I also think this is very important.

Again, the more diverse the student body becomes, the more likely there are to be moments when people who won't understand each other because their backgrounds will be so different, their experiences will be so different. And when those moments come it's very, very important that young people at least have been given a chance to know that there's some other way to resolve their differences—also that they don't have to bury them, because that also becomes a big problem. I mean, a lot of these kids that do really bad things are too far gone when the times they do it, but it's only after years and years and years and years of internalizing things that had they not been buried, the children might have been saved.

So I think that you deserve a lot of credit for that, too, and I think that should be a part of every school's effort, and I thank you for it.

I want to now talk to Laura Avalos-Arguedas, who is an AmeriCorps volunteer with the City Year program in Columbus. She was born in Costa Rica and moved to the United States when she was 6 years old. She graduated from Grandview Heights High School in 1998 and began a 2 year volunteer program in City Year, where she tutors four first grade students in reading at the Second Avenue Elementary School. So I'd like for her to talk about that.

And I just want to say, I don't know that I have done anything as President that I'm any more proud of than establish the AmeriCorps program. We've now had over 150,000 young people like Laura spend 1 or 2 years in this program, working in communities—sometimes in their home communities, sometimes half a nation away—and at the process, earning money for college. In the first 4 years of AmeriCorps, we had more people than we had in the first 20 years of

the Peace Corps. And it's just been an amazing thing.

So I'd like for you, Laura, to talk about why did you decide to become a volunteer in the City Year program, and how do you feel about the mentoring you're doing and the relationships you're building with the students? And do you think it's improving their learning?

[Laura Avalos-Arguedas described her experience with the City Year program and commented on how popular the after-school program was with students.]

The President. Mr. Mayor, I think if she had 140 kids show up with 7 corps members, she just made the strongest case for your after-school initiative. *[Laughter]*

Mayor Coleman. I think she has.

The President. I think you need to make her witness A in your—

Ms. Avalos-Arguedas. We have to cut down.

[Mayor Coleman pointed out the growing need for more after-school programs.]

The President. I want to go now to a product of another program I'm very proud of that I did not start. It existed in the Government when I became President, but we have dramatically expanded it. It's called the Troops to Teachers program, where people who have served in the military, when they retire or when they leave the military, then move into teaching. And in an environment in which a lot of our kids come from difficult home situations, I think that the Troop to Teachers program has made a big impact in a lot of places.

Eastgate Elementary has a teacher who came out of 20 years in the Air Force, Darrell Bryon. He's here with us today. And I'd like for him to talk a little bit about what made him decide to switch careers. He doesn't look old enough to have been in the Air Force 20 years. I don't know if he was honest about his age when he joined. *[Laughter]* And he teaches a fourth-fifth grade split class. I'd like for him to talk a little bit about how his previous experience helps him in the classroom.

Mr. Bryon.

[Darrell Bryon explained how his military experience helped to prepare him for the demands of teaching.]

The President. When you told that story about your student sort of talking back to you, I thought to myself, his training in the military has qualified him to be a teacher; his experience as a teacher may have qualified him to be President. *[Laughter]* So I can really identify with that.

Harry Truman once said that being President was a job in which you spent most of your time trying to talk people into doing things they should do without your having to ask them in the first place. *[Laughter]* But I thank you for your dedication.

Let me now call on Shirley Goins, who is a teacher in the Monroe Middle School, a sixth-grade teacher. And she has worked as a teacher for 30 years. She's taught at Monroe the last 18. And Monroe recently instituted a school uniform policy which required the children to wear white shirts and blue bottoms, and the parents of the students supported it.

When I started supporting these several years ago, some people derided me as being for a little idea that a President shouldn't be paying attention to, but I was inclined to disagree. And I would like for Shirley to talk a little bit about why her school adopted this policy, and what its effect on discipline and academic achievement and the way the students relate to each other has been.

[Shirley Goins described how the uniform policy helped students to focus on their work, rather than being distracted by frivolous clothing styles.]

The President. That's great. You know, when I started—my wife is the first person who ever talked to me about school uniforms. She's always been for them. She's a fanatic supporter of—now, I guess now that she's a candidate for office, I shouldn't use the word "fanatic." *[Laughter]* Subject to being used against her, I suppose. But we talked about it a lot for young kids.

And the first place I went to explore this was Newport Beach, California, which is the third biggest school district in California. And when the junior high schools adopted it out there, the middle schools, they did it in self-

defense, because they had a lot of gangs. So they picked colors to dress in that would protect the kids. All the gangs wore red and blue, so all the uniforms were something other than red and blue. And then all the schools got to pick their own colors and do whatever they wanted.

But I had two children talking to me about it, one young man who came from a difficult circumstance who told me it was the first time he felt safe walking to school in 2 years, and one young woman who was in a much better situation economically, where she said she felt like she had been liberated, that neither she nor her classmates could look down on or feel looked down on as a result of the clothes they wore. They were no longer distracted, and they felt good. They were looking forward to going to high school where they wouldn't have to do it anymore, but they thought it had really calmed the atmosphere in the school and that learning had increased and discipline problems had decreased. I thought it was a very interesting.

Between Hillary and those kids, I've been pretty well sold on it ever since. *[Applause]* Yes, one person agrees with me in the crowd. *[Laughter]* Is this a school-by-school option in the Columbus school district?

Ms. Goins. Yes, Mr. President, it is not required. It is a school community decision with parents.

The President. Now, how many schools have uniform policies in this—

Ms. Goins. Mr. President, I cannot answer that question. *[Laughter]*

The President. Does anybody know? Are there others? But there is more than one?

Ms. Goins. There are others. There are several—many, I would say.

The President. I think, by the way, that's a good decision. I think if you have it district-wide, then you've got to—there you go, good for you, looks great. That looks great. I think you either have to—if it's going to be a district-wide decision, it's got to be handled just the way it would be school by school. It's a very delicate thing. It only works if the parents are for it—and if the kids buy into it. Even if they have reservations, they've got to buy into it. So it's better not something that somebody like me decides is the right thing to do.

What we tried to do is to show people how to do it, including how districts have dealt with the families who couldn't afford to buy the uniforms, where they got the money, how they did all that sort of stuff. But I do think it has some merit.

[Ms. Goins concurred that parents and students needed to agree on the policy.]

The President. Now, what school do you represent in your uniform?

Student. I represent Columbus—

The President. Good for you. That's a great looking uniform. Thank you. I have been hissed and cheered by students talking about this. [Laughter]

Mayor Coleman. You're only going to be cheered here in Columbus, Mr. President. [Laughter]

The President. Is there anything else anybody would like to say? Is there anybody in the audience wants to ask anybody on the panel a question? Yes, sir?

Q. Mr. President, I was wondering if Al Gore, if he becomes the next President, will be continuing your policies and ideals, because they are excellent.

The President. Yes, he actually—he's been outlining his education program, and I would say that there are a couple of areas, obviously, because he can look ahead 4 years beyond what I can argue for. One of the things that he believes, in addition—he has supported our educational accountability fund that I just explained and all these things I talked about. And he's going to have—he's actually giving a whole speech tomorrow on teacher quality, which I hope you will follow. He's been working very hard on it and talking to people around the country, educators and others.

In addition to that, in the primary, he came out for a program to add another several hundred thousand teachers, federally funded, to the 100,000 that we've already provided. We're very concerned that over the next decade another 2 million teachers will retire as the number of students continues to swell. And so we think it—you know, I agree—but he came and talked to me about this. He didn't—it was entirely his idea, not mine. But he said, "I think I'm going to go out there and advocate that we take a certain percent-

age of this surplus and just dedicate it to helping the communities hire teachers." Once we get the 100,000 in there, so we know we can get an average class size of 20 in the early grades, the rest—we're just going to be killing ourselves to get properly qualified teachers in the classroom because people retire.

And so I think you could feel every confidence that he would support the things that have been done, but that he would build on them and do better. That's what I think will happen.

[A participant said a student had commented that the President would be a tough act to follow.]

The President. Well, I appreciated his saying that. But the truth is that the country is changing a lot economically, and let me try to put this education issue that we've been talking about here into the larger context.

When I became President in 1992—and the people of Ohio were good enough to vote for me and the Vice President—the big issue was how could we turn the country around. The economy was in a shambles. The crime was exploding. The welfare rates were exploding. Things didn't seem to be working. And so in the last 7 years, I've tried to look to the long-term challenges of the future, but first we had to get the ship of state righted. Things had to be working.

Now, you're not very cynical anymore about whether you can actually make things better. I mean, if you look at—you know, we've gone from a big deficit to a big surplus. We're paying down the debt. We've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. The welfare rolls have been cut in half. Crime is down to a 25-year low. Poverty is at a 20-year low; African-American, Hispanic unemployment the lowest ever recorded; female unemployment the lowest in 40 years.

I say that to say, nobody questions whether we have the capacity as a people to improve. Nationwide, reading and math scores are up about a grade level. But in places where there's been a sharp focus on results and on turning around low performing schools like Columbus, the results are much more dramatic, but they're up. We have—90 percent

of our kids are immunized against serious diseases for the first time. We've—all the environmental indicators are better.

So the question that the country faces now is a very different question than it faced in 1992. The question we face now is, what is it that we propose to do with this moment of unprecedented prosperity? The question, by the way, also is not whether you're going to change. The world is changing so fast, America will change. It will change just as much in the next 4 years as it has in the previous 4 and the 4 before that. So the question is not whether you're going to change. The question is how you're going to change.

You know, if the Vice President were running for President and he said, "Vote for me; I'll do everything Bill Clinton did," I wouldn't vote for him, because the world's going to be different. That's not—his message is that, "Look, this approach works, so we ought to change by building on it. And here's how I'll build on it. I don't think we ought to abandon the approach in economics and education and health care and welfare reform and all these issues, but we're going to have to change." And my take on this as a citizen, as well as somebody with some experience now in these affairs, is that the way to decide what direction you want to take is to first ask yourself, where would you like to go?

I remember one of the funniest things Yogi Berra used to say is that we may be lost, but we're making good time. [*Laughter*] I mean, you've got to ask yourself, where would you like to go? Now, my opinion is—and again, it's not going to be on my watch, but my opinion is that for the first time in at least 35 years, since we had this kind of economy again—which basically came apart in the Vietnam war and the civil rights crisis and a lot of other problems we had in the country in the 1960's—this is the first time we've had since then to say, okay, here's where we want to go, and here's what we're going to do to get there.

So my view is, one of our goals ought to be to guarantee that every child in this country will have access to a world-class education; that everybody will be able to afford to go to college if they're otherwise qualified; that poverty among children can be elimi-

nated within through the tax system and other supports; that every working family ought to be able to at least have access to affordable health insurance; that we will deal with the challenges that the aging of America—when the baby boomers retire and there's only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security—we will act now, not then, to save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit that's voluntary for the seniors—big challenges.

On the environmental front, we have to tackle this whole issue of global warming. You're all in here fanning yourselves; the truth is that the climate of this Earth is going up at a very difficult rate. Now that may seem like an obscure issue, because Columbus is way inland, but it's not going to be very funny if the polar icecaps keep melting and the oceans rise and the sugarcane fields in Louisiana and the Florida Everglades were buried and the agricultural production of America starts to go north and the whole framework of life here is changed—and people in Africa start getting even more cases of malaria and children dying from dehydration. This is a big issue.

So that's what I gave my State of the Union about. But I think what all you need to decide as citizens is, what do you want for your kids? What do you want for your families? What do you want for your future? Where do you want to go? Then you have to say—8 years ago, I wouldn't have believed that we could write the future of our dreams. But now I know America can work.

So again, it's kind of like school reform. We don't have an excuse anymore for not saying what would we like America to be like when our children are our age. Because we know we can make America better now. We don't have an excuse; we know that. So every one of you—I wish you'd go home and take a piece of paper and say, what would I like America to look like in 10 years? And then, how does America have to change—not whether, but how—to get there?

That's how you'll know who to vote for. That's how you know what ideas you think work. To ask yourself, where do you want to go? And my earnest plea to the American people this year is to do that, so we can take

on these big challenges, because that's what I've been working for. I've been working for the day that when I left office, this country would have both the self-confidence and the capacity to build the future of our dreams for our children. And we can do it now. That's what I think we ought to be doing. [Dr. Smith and Mayor Coleman thanked the President for his participation.]

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at Eastgate Elementary School. In his remarks, the President referred to State Representative Joyce Beatty; City Council President Matthew D. Habash; State House Minority Leaders Jack Ford; and Gary Allen, vice president Ohio Education Association. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on Legislation on Trade
With the Caribbean Basin and Africa**
May 4, 2000

Today's vote is a key milestone toward enactment of legislation that will launch a new era of cooperation between the United States and our partners in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. This important measure will strengthen our economic partnership with these nations, lower trade barriers, help developing nations to lift their people out of poverty, and create a more secure world. I congratulate those Members of Congress who have worked hard to reach agreement on this bill. I look forward to signing this historic legislation into law upon final passage.

**Message on the Observance
of Cinco de Mayo, 2000**
May 4, 2000

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

This annual celebration of the Mexican Army's triumph at the Battle of Puebla reminds us all of Mexico's long-standing commitment to the ideals of freedom and self-determination. United by our common convictions, the United States and Mexico have long enjoyed warm ties of friendship and mutual respect, and in recent years, our two na-

tions have worked hard to cultivate this increasingly close partnership. From the arts to business to education to the environment, citizens of the United States and Mexico are gaining a greater understanding and a new appreciation of each other, increasing our prospects for a future of peace and prosperity.

We must continue working to open new bridges of friendship and cooperation. This is a promising time for the Americas, and we have an historic opportunity to build our collective economic strength, improve the well-being of our people, and advance the movement toward democracy of all the nations in our hemisphere. As we celebrate Mexico's valiant fight for independence, let us rededicate ourselves to the principles that inspired the Mexican patriots who fought at Puebla and strive together to forge a brighter future for all our citizens.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

Bill Clinton

**Proclamation 7303—National
Day of Prayer, 2000**
May 4, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Throughout our Nation's history, Americans have come before God with humble hearts to ask forgiveness, to seek wisdom, and to offer thanksgiving and praise. The framers of our democracy, on a quest for freedom and equality, were fueled by an abiding faith in a just and loving God, to whom they turned often for guidance and strength.

Succeeding generations of Americans, striving to preserve that freedom in the face of challenges posed by enemies abroad or conflict at home, also turned their hearts and minds to God in prayer. Today, whether celebrating the special moments in our lives, searching for strength and meaning in the face of problems or grief, or simply giving thanks for the blessing of a new day, Americans continue to use the powerful medium of prayer.

Now more than ever, Americans treasure our religious freedom, which embraces the many diverse communities of faith that have infused our society and our cultural heritage through more than two centuries. Millions of Americans gratefully sustain the tradition of prayer in churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and other houses of worship across our country.

And we continue to rely on our faith as a pillar of strength, even in this era of unprecedented peace and prosperity. We pray for the spirit of reconciliation, so that we may overcome the divisions of race, religion, culture, and background that have scarred our society in recent years. We pray for the spirit of compassion so that we will reach out to others who have not shared equally in this world's bounteous blessings—those here at home who struggle for economic and educational opportunity and those around the globe whose lives have been darkened by the shadows of poverty, oppression, natural disaster, or disease. And we must always pray for wisdom—the wisdom to raise children with strong values and loving hearts; the wisdom to live in harmony with our environment and to preserve its health and beauty for the benefit of future generations; and the wisdom to keep America the world's greatest hope for freedom, peace, and human dignity in the 21st century.

The Congress, by Public Law 100–307, has called on our citizens to reaffirm the role of prayer in our society and to honor the religious diversity our freedom permits by recognizing annually a “National Day of Prayer.”

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 4, 2000, as a National Day of Prayer. I encourage the citizens of this great Nation to pray, each in his or her own manner, seeking strength from God to face today's challenges, seeking guidance for tomorrow's uncertainties, and giving thanks for the rich blessings that our country has enjoyed throughout its history.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 5, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 8.

Memorandum on Additional Guidelines for Charter Schools

May 4, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Education

Subject: Additional Guidelines for Charter Schools

My Administration has taken landmark steps to help State and localities improve educational opportunities for students by providing much needed resources to reduce class size, improve teacher quality, and expand summer school and after-school programs. Last year, for the first time ever, the Federal Government provided funds to States and localities specifically to intervene and assist low-performing schools. This year, our School Improvement Fund will provide \$134 million to States and localities to help them turn around low-performing schools. In addition, through the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Goals 2000, States have developed standards and accountability systems to identify schools that are low performing. Already, we are seeing results from this focus on standards-based reform and greater investment, including a rise in test scores among our most disadvantaged students. Nonetheless, much work remains to be done. In too many communities, predominately low-income communities, there is still a shortage of high-quality educational opportunities available to students.

One of the most heartening educational developments during my Administration is the extraordinary growth of public charter schools. In 1992, just before I took office, there was only one charter school in the country, City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since then, because of strong leadership at the local, State, and Federal level, the number of charter schools has exploded and it is now estimated that there are more than 1,700 charter schools nationwide. The Federal Government has invested almost \$400 million in charter schools since 1994,

and advocates of charter schools credit this investment for the remarkable growth of charter schools. The Budget that I sent to the Congress this year will provide \$175 million for charter schools in FY 2001. By next year, the charter school program will have helped nearly 2,400 charter schools since its inception, supporting my Administration's goal of creating 3,000 public charter schools by 2002.

Charter schools are a vital engine of school reform because they promote accountability for results, competition, and choice within the public school system. Unlike vouchers, which do nothing to increase the number of high-quality educational options for students in a community, charter schools allow local community groups, teachers, or parents to open public schools that meet their needs. And, unlike vouchers, charter schools do not drain taxpayer dollars from the public school system and are accountable to the public for results. Because charter schools are truly community-based schools created by local communities to address their own particular needs, it is essential that all institutions in a community understand how they can play a role with regard to charter schools. Every entity that can play a positive role in school reform needs to be engaged in ensuring that children and parents have high-quality public schools and choices among those public schools.

Among the community institutions that can provide important support for the goals of charter schools are local faith-based and business institutions. Both have resources that can support the efforts of charter schools to create high-quality, innovative learning environments that serve all children and help them to meet high standards.

Faith-based and community-based organizations play an important role in feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and educating our children in communities around this Nation. Already many faith- and community-based organizations partner with government at the Federal, State, and local level to help our Nation's families. Under my Administration, faith-based organizations have also become eligible to receive Federal funds in an array of social programs on the same basis as other community-based organizations, consistent

with the constitutional line between church and state. For example, States can use their welfare reform funds to contract with faith-based organizations on the same basis as other nongovernment providers to provide services such as job preparation, mentoring, childcare, and other services to help families moving from welfare to work. The 1998 Human Services reauthorization similarly allows faith-based organizations to provide services under the Community Services Block Grant to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and help low-income families become self-sufficient.

Vice President Gore and I support such efforts and believe we can do even more to increase the valuable partnership role religiously affiliated and community-based organizations can play in addressing some of the most important issues facing our families and communities. My Administration has proposed to increase the involvement of such organizations in education, housing, community-development, criminal and juvenile-justice programs, in breaking the cycle of teen pregnancy, promoting responsible fatherhood, and helping families move from welfare to work. To help support these worthy causes, my Budget will provide tax breaks to encourage all Americans to give to charity.

Schools and faith communities should be reaching out to each other, in ways consistent with the Constitution, to support their common goals for children and families. There are successful partnerships between public schools and faith communities across the Nation in after-school programs, school safety, discipline, and student literacy. These range from mentoring programs jointly run by schools and interfaith groups to statewide summits on the role of faith-based groups in college preparation. In 1995, we sent every school district in the country the guidebook *Religion in the Public Schools: A Statement of Principles*. Last December, building on those principles, I announced a comprehensive set of guidelines to be mailed to every public school in the Nation and to leading religious organizations encouraging greater cooperation, within constitutional limits, between public schools and community groups, including faith-based organizations. The guidelines emphasized both the protection of

private religious expression in schools and the prohibitions against coerced student participation in religious expression. These guidelines were the culmination of my Administration's 4-year effort to forge consensus on the role of religion in the schools.

Likewise, business institutions have proven themselves to be valuable partners in helping schools and school districts better prepare students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be part of the 21st century workforce. Over the last 2 decades, businesses have played a leadership role at the local, State, and national levels in supporting the need for school reform and advancing the standards-based movement. Although school-business partnership can be little more than a donation, there are many examples across the country of businesses that are working actively with schools to help improve the quality of public education. In these partnerships, businesses are working to help bolster school curricula, train teachers, implement technology effectively, offer mentors and tutors to students, and provide lessons in management and leadership. If this Nation's public schools are to offer the kind of high-quality education that prepares students for the world of work and active citizenship, then businesses must play a key role in this process.

Businesses have much to offer the charter movement. Because charter schools are exempt from many regulations governing traditional public schools, they have more freedom to develop innovative educational programs and to partner with business institutions in creative ways. Currently, there are over 100 employer-linked charter schools in operation across the country. These schools vary from those offering very focused career preparation, to those that incorporate modest exposure to jobs, careers, and employers. What they share in common are innovative environments that offer work-based and career-focused educational experiences for students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

But I believe that businesses can do more to work with charter schools to develop stimulating educational environments that prepare our students for the challenges of the workforce in the 21st century. I especially believe that employer-linked charter schools

offer a new range of possibilities for those students who are not finding success in our more traditional public schools.

Accordingly, because there is still a great deal of confusion about how different entities can be involved in the charter movement, I direct you to work together with the Department of Justice to develop guidelines to be released prior to the 2000–2001 school year to help faith-based and other community-based and business institutions understand the role they can play in the charter school movement. Public charter schools must be nonsectarian and nondiscriminatory in their admissions and practices. In addition, as with other public schools, a charter school should not offer opportunities for the commercial exploitation of its students and/or its mission. However, there are numerous ways that faith-based groups and employers can play a positive role in creating and supporting public charter schools, just as other community organizations do. These guidelines would augment the existing guidelines for public charter schools and the guidelines for religious expression in public schools that I released in December.

Increasing the quality of education in this country for disadvantaged students is a national priority but requires the active involvement of every affected community. In economically distressed communities, faith-based organizations and business partners can play critically important roles in providing needed support services and job-focused experiences for students who too often lack either. Ensuring that faith-based and business institutions can play a vigorous role in expanding educational opportunities while respecting the separation of church and state and the limitations on commercial involvement in schools is an important step to providing high-quality educational experiences for all children.

William J. Clinton

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of Japan

May 5, 2000

The President. Good morning.

Visit of Prime Minister Mori

Q. What are you going to talk about?

The President. Well, we're going to talk about our relationship, which is very, very important to both of us. I'm delighted to have Prime Minister Mori here and anxious to have this chance to visit, and I'm also very much looking forward to going to Okinawa to the G-8 meeting this year. So we have a lot to visit about.

Q. Is this your first meeting?

The President. Yes. It's our first official meeting, yes. We met briefly once before.

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to talk about trade and especially the telecommunication dispute?

The President. We're going to talk about everything, I hope—everything we have time to talk about.

Japanese Economy

Q. What's your view of the Japanese economy?

The President. I think it's getting better, and we're going to talk about what the future is. We support a strong Japanese economy. I think there are a lot of inherent strengths in the economy, most of all in the people and the level of skill and education and capacity to grow. I believe that they will return to big growth, I hope sooner rather than later.

Q. Mr. President, what's your message to the people of Okinawa?

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, the American economy, is it overheating?

The President. Well, the inflation report yesterday was quite good. And as you know, this morning the unemployment report is wonderful news for the American people, the lowest in over 30 years now. So I'm hopeful, because combined with yesterday's inflation report, the news is good, and we just have to keep on a steady course, keep working.

Okinawa

Q. Mr. President, what's your message to the people of Okinawa when you go there in July? Are you willing to talk with them and explain to them why we need to maintain all those U.S. bases in Okinawa?

The President. I hope I'll have a chance to speak with them, and I want to talk to the Prime Minister about how we should do that. But we tried to be sensitive to the concerns of the people and to be highly respectful. And where mistakes have been made, we've tried to correct them, and we will continue to do that.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:57 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

**Remarks on Departure for
Farmington, Pennsylvania and an
Exchange With Reporters**

May 5, 2000

Employment Report

The President. Good afternoon. In a few moments I will depart for a meeting with the Senate Democrats in Pennsylvania, where we will discuss ways to keep our economy strong and our Nation moving in the right direction.

Before I leave, I'd like to share the latest good news about our economy. This morning, we received the news that we have achieved 3.9 percent unemployment. That is the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957. That was the year the Dodgers last played ball in Brooklyn.

Most Americans have never lived in a peacetime economy with unemployment as low as it is today. Indeed, its lowest rate overall in over 30 years. Over the last 7 years, our Nation has created 21 million new jobs, cut the unemployment rate almost in half.

I just want to make the point again that this is clear evidence that our economic strategy works, fiscal discipline, more investment in education, technology and training, the expansion of markets for American products and services. It's given us the lowest unemployment rate for African-Americans and Hispanic ever recorded, the lowest unemployment rate for women in more than 40 years, strong wage growth among all income groups.

The American people deserve the lion's share of the credit for this historic achievement. But we have a responsibility to stay

on the path that got us here, the path of fiscal discipline, debt reduction, expanded trade and increased investments in our future. I hope we will do that. This is a happy day for the people of the United States. Thank you.

National Rifle Association

Q. Mr. President, what did you think of the video done by the NRA sometime ago?

The President. The NRA video? I haven't seen it. I thought you were great in mine.

Q. Put that in writing. *[Laughter]*

Q. Mr. President, we don't know if your—

The President. No, I really haven't seen it. I'll be glad to comment on it once I see it or know what's in it. But I haven't seen it.

Q. You haven't read about it?

The President. I heard about it, but I haven't—the one where they're—oh, do you mean the film where they say they're going to have an office in the White House? Did they make that video, or was it just video by someone else? I thought they were trying to keep that a secret until after the election.

What I think about it—I don't know that they think that Mr. LaPierre will literally have an office here if President Bush—Governor Bush gets elected President. But I do believe that it's clear, from the record of Governor Bush in Texas and from the statements and from the increased visibility of the role of the NRA in the Republican National committee, that whatever is done on this issue will only be done with their approval. They will have unprecedented influence here if the American people should decide that that's what they want.

But you know, that's what you have elections for. You can—I can believe that without thinking anything bad about Mr. LaPierre or about Governor Bush. I think they may just really agree that we shouldn't close the gun show loophole or ban the importation of large-scale ammunition clips.

Q. Do you think it's going to be a—

The President. Let me just say—let me remind you, the previous Republican administration was not for the Brady bill and they weren't for the legislation banning cop-killer bullets. That's just the way they think.

But I think one of the reasons I'm glad the Million Mom March is occurring is that it at least raises the possibility that Americans who disagree, who believe that we can have commonsense gun safety measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children, without having something that they believe is destructive gun control, those people may vote on these issues this year.

But the American people need to understand, this is one of the four or five big choices before them, and they'll just have to decide and that all the NRA did was to commit the truth. I mean, they told the truth, and what they said was right.

"I Love You" Computer Virus

Q. Mr. President, I don't know if your office has been affected or infected in any way, but what does this "I love you" computer virus say about the world, our society, et cetera, and how maybe even one person can affect it and create chaos?

The President. Well, it says that—first of all, we've been very fortunate—the Government has fared well, here. But it says that we've got a lot more work to do to protect all these systems in the private sector, and the Government has to keep working, too. It says that as we become more interconnected, in an open way, that we become—as we reap the benefits of greater inter-connectivity, we become more vulnerable to the disruptive forces that would seek to—either for bad design or just to provoke chaos—to take advantage of it, and we just have to keep working on this. But I'm very gratified that the fundamental governmental systems seemed to have been unaffected here, and we just have to keep working on it.

Osama bin Ladin

Q. Mr. President, the State Department, the other day, issued an international report on terrorism. And also, this was the last of your administration, sir, and as Osama bin Ladin is still at-large, so what do you have to say about international terrorism and all the—

The President. You mean about bin Ladin still being at large? Well, we're doing our

part to change it. And I hope we'll be successful.

Interest Rates

Q. Mr. President, on the economy, are you afraid the Fed's going to raise the rate in response to the numbers?

The President. Well, I think that these numbers have to be seen in terms of yesterday's numbers. Yesterday's inflation figures were quite encouraging, and I think they show that—core inflation at something like 2.4 percent, and I think the overall inflation rate will come back toward that, now that the oil prices are moderating. So I think that should be quite encouraging, not just to the Fed but to all Americans and to American business—that basically the productivity of the work force, continuing to be fueled by information technology, has enabled us to have an amazing amount of growth and low unemployment, at quite modest levels of inflation, and so that's encouraging to me, and I think the facts speak for themselves on that.

Thank you.

Vieques Operation

Q. What did you think of the Vieques operation?

The President. Well, it went pretty well, I think. They did a good job.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association; and Osama bin Ladin, who allegedly sponsored bombing attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998.

Statement on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Report

May 5, 2000

Today we have further proof of the continued strength of our economy. With the announcement of 3.9 percent unemployment, we have broken the 4 percent barrier for the first time in three decades. Over the last 7 years, our Nation has created 21 million new jobs and cut the unemployment rate nearly in half. This is more than a symbolic mile-

stone in the longest and strongest economic expansion in history. It shows that our strategy of fiscal discipline is working for all Americans. We have the lowest unemployment for African-Americans and Hispanics on record, the lowest unemployment for women in more than 40 years, and strong wage growth among all income groups.

The American people deserve credit for this historic achievement. And they have made it clear that we should stay on the path of fiscal discipline, debt reduction, and targeted investments in our people. We should not adopt risky tax cuts that would derail our hard won prosperity. We have a responsibility to maintain the fiscal discipline that got us here.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

April 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Detroit, MI, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

May 1

The President announced his intention to nominate Katherine Milner Anderson to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark S. Wrighton to be a member of the National Science Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Walter Kaye and Tazewell T. Shepard III to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rear Adm. Raymond A. Archer III, SC, USN as a member of the Committee For Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

May 2

In the evening, the President met with Hong Kong Democratic Party Chairman Martin Lee in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara J. Sapin to be Vice Chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Clayton M. Jones to the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

May 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Owensboro, KY, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Davenport, IA. In the evening, the President traveled to St. Paul, MN.

The President announced his intention to appoint Fran C. Eizenstat as a member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

The President announced his intention to designate Greg Farmer, Lawrence Parks, and Madeline McCullough Petty to the National Capital Revitalization Corporation Authority.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on April 19–20.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Miguel Angel Rodriguez of Costa Rica in the Oval Office on May 9.

May 4

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Columbus, OH, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Owen James Sheaks to be Assistant Secretary of State for Verification and Compliance.

The President announced the nomination of Gen. John A. Gordon, USAF, to be Under Secretary for Nuclear Security and Administrator of the National Security Administration at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Norman Y. Mineta, Haunani Apoliona, Gloria Caoile, Martha Choe, Susan Soon-Keum Cox, Vinod Dham, Wilfred P. Leon Guerrero, Tessie Guillermo, Dennis Hayashi, David D. Ho, Ngoan Le, Jonathon R. Leong, Mukesh (Mike) Patel, Jacinta

Folasa Titilii, and Lee Pao Xiong to serve on the Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

May 5

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Farmington, PA, and later he traveled to Lancaster, VA. In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate James O. Armitage to be a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nicholas C. Burckel as a member of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted May 1

John Ramsey Johnson, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Ellen Segal Huvelle, elevated.

Submitted May 2

James Edgar Baker, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for the term of 15 years to expire on the date prescribed by law, vice Walter T. Cox III, term expired.

Submitted May 3

Katherine Milner Anderson, of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2006 (reappointment).

Dennis M. Cavanaugh, of New Jersey, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey, vice Alfred M. Wolin, retiring.

Gen. John A. Gordon,
U.S. Air Force, to be Under Secretary for
Nuclear Security, Department of Energy
(new position).

Marc B. Nathanson,
of California, to be a member of the Broad-
casting Board of Governors for a term expir-
ing August 13, 2001 (reappointment).

Marc B. Nathanson,
of California, to be Chairman of the Broad-
casting Board of Governors (new position).

Barbara J. Sabin,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Merit
Systems Protection Board for the term of 7
years expiring March 1, 2007, vice Benjamin
Leader Erdreich, resigned.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of
Other White House Announcements.

Released May 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Director of
the Office of Science and Technology Neal
Lane, Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Command, Control, Communications and
Intelligence Arthur L. Money, National Ocea-
nic and Atmospheric Administration Ad-
ministrator James Baker, and Assistant Sec-
retary for Transportation Policy Gene Conti
on the improvements in the Global Posi-
tioning System

Transcript of a press briefing by Treasury
Secretary Larry Summers on progress in pay-
ing down the national debt

Released May 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Court
of Appeals Judge for the Armed Forces

Advance text of remarks by National Security
Adviser Samuel Berger on China at the East
Asian Institute

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to
the President for Domestic Policy Planning
Bruce Reed and the First Lady's Deputy
Chief of Staff Shirley Sagawa on the White
House Conference on Teenagers and Re-
sourceful Youth

Released May 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to
the President for Domestic Policy Bruce
Reed on the President's education tour

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by
Costa Rican President Miguel Angel
Rodriguez

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Dis-
trict Judge for the District of New Jersey

Released May 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Joe Lockhart

Acts Approved by the President

Approved May 2

H.R. 1231 / Public Law 106-187

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to con-
vey certain National Forest lands to Elko
County, Nevada, for continued use as a cem-
etery

H.R. 2368 / Public Law 106-188

Bikini Resettlement and Relocation Act of
2000

H.R. 2862 / Public Law 106-189

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to re-
lease reversionary interests held by the
United States in certain parcels of land in
Washington County, Utah, to facilitate an an-
ticipated land exchange

H.R. 2863 / Public Law 106–190

To clarify the legal effect on the United States of the acquisition of a parcel of land in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve in the State of Utah

H.R. 3063 / Public Law 106–191

To amend the Mineral Leasing Act to increase the maximum acreage of Federal leases for sodium that may be held by an entity in any one State, and for other purposes

Approved May 4

H.R. 1615 / Public Law 106–192

Lamprey Wild and Scenic River Extension Act

H.R. 1753 / Public Law 106–193

Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000

H.R. 3090 / Public Law 106–194

To amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to restore certain lands to the Elim Native Corporation, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 86 / Public Law 106–195

Recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Korean War and the service by members of the Armed Forces during such war, and for other purposes

S. 1567 / Public Law 106–196

To designate the United States courthouse located at 223 Broad Avenue in Albany, Georgia, as the “C.B. King United States Courthouse”

S. 1769 / Public Law 106–197

To exempt certain reports from automatic elimination and sunset pursuant to the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995, and for other purposes